Rollye James

What Am I Doing Here?

(when everything I want is somewhere else)

a Radio Repair Manual - for what's not working in your life

Rollye James has never ceased to grab my attention by the nose hairs, and tweek. "What Am I Doing Here?" is a radio action packed motivational trip of a twisted mind. In a good way. We need more angry white women.

GARY BURBANK - Radio Legend

Anyone who's anyone in the industry knows Rollye James. Her encyclopedic knowledge of radio is legendary, combine that with her real-life experiences from coast-to-coast and you have one of the most intelligent, eclectic and soulful humans on the planet. Her sage advice has been something she has given to me, selflessly, and has been a major component in my life. It will be to you too— after you read this book.

KEVIN GERSHAN - Entertainment Tonight/CBS Television Distribution

Rollye James is that unique voice among my radio brethren who actually puts perspective to the stories we all say we'll write someday. This is one compelling book. More than a where-are-they-now, this is a how-the-hell-did-they-get-there starring names you had forgotten. Until now. I dare you to change this station.

RON FLATTER - ESPN Radio/Fox News Radio/Sport 927 Australia

The first time I heard anyone on a mainstream commercial station discussing the shadow government and the globalists who really call the shots in our country, it was Rollye James, many years ago. I'd take her advice on radio-- or anything else.

ALEX JONES - INFOWARS.COM

Read this book to discover just how radio has shaped American culture and why truth telling radio--the kind of radio you hear from Rollye James--threatens America's ruling elites and their lapdog media.

ROGER HEDGECOCK - Nationally Syndicated Radio Host

Rollye James has been on the radio since the 1960s playing records, reading news, creating commercials and, for the past three decades, hosting talk shows across America where, according to Philadelphia's City Paper, she's the personality "Most Likely To Make Rush Limbaugh Sound Rational."

NICKAJACK PRESS

ISBN 978-0-9845880-0-8
51995 >
9 780984 588008

What Am I Doing Here?
(when everything I want is somewhere else)

a Radio Repair Manual - for what's not working in your life

ROLLYE JAMES

Nickajack Press
Liberty Lake, WA

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

LC Control Number: 2010929589
LCCN Permalink: http://lccn.loc.gov/2010929589

James, Rollye – author & editor

What Am I Doing Here? (when everything I want is somewhere else) :
a Radio Repair Manual - for what's not working in your life /
Rollye James

1st Ed.

Liberty Lake, WA Nickajack Press, Inc. 2010

p.cm.

ISBN: 978-0-9845880-0-8

Printed in the United States

First Printing

www.nickajackpress.com

Cover photography and design by Jon Cornell

To all the magic makers— Todd Storz, Gordon McLendon, and so many others, but especially all the unsung heroes of early Top 40: every disc jockey who ever got a listener through the night, or made a fan laugh during the day. Your names may not be top of mind anymore, but the memories you created will remain in our hearts forever.

To Sean Compton— an unwavering friend, whose passion and dedication prove that all the magic isn't gone.

To my husband Jon Cornell— without his prodding, I would not have written any of this. He thinks I still have more to say, so you may not have read the last of me.

Contents

Chapter 1
The Illusion of Security

Several years ago, I was sitting at a large dinner with a group of people including the CEO of a major company and his adoring wife. She regaled the details of moving into her husband's palatial home before they were married four years earlier, and punctuated her sentiments with a reflection on how odd it was to know you had just moved into the last house in which you'd ever live. Frankly, only good taste precluded my asking if she had a terminal illness. Instead, I flatly commented, *'You don't know that.'* It was a blanket statement, which would have been accurate under any circumstance, though more so in this case. She was blissfully unaware her beloved was sleeping with half of the women at the table.

As I broke it to her that the only security any of us have is our knowledge of, and belief in, our own internal ability to thrive under whatever conditions we might face; she recoiled at the thought her life was in any way not completely settled. *'I'd hate to think like you!'* she exclaimed. Her security was wrapped around external trappings, and it was easy to imagine the emotional fallout, which would follow when her illusions were shattered. And shattered they were, in a few scant years, as all in attendance anticipated they would be.

But not one of us expected the fate of her husband. Clearly in command of his life and the gathering that night, he knew he'd continue to head the company he built. His self-image and position were synonymous. If ever someone was his job, this was the guy. Everyone who knew him felt no one would be taking over his position, at least not without his blessing, and not anytime soon. He was that good. He had it going on. Going? You know where this is going. In about five years, he was unceremoniously ousted.

This is not a tale of sardonic irony wherein two divergent fates dovetail into similar losses, though that's also true. This is a glimpse of a pattern affecting human nature more often than not, regardless of the details specific to any one individual: Most of us base our feelings of security on something outside ourselves. And right now, after the first decade of the 21st Century has come to a close with nothing certain financially, except the uncertainty of it all— hanging on to outside security is becoming a huge problem, particularly for those who have taken comfort in material resources.

Not that there's any reason to knock money. The more the better, sounds good— but how many friends do you have, and maybe you're among them, who believe they'd be secure if they had a few million bucks in reserve? No matter how materially oriented you may or may not be, the ability to forever call your own shots because you have your own assets, is a liberating thought.

That said, we're all aware money doesn't buy everything. We know it can't control the intangibles, such as whether we're loved or healthy. But wouldn't it be better to know that should you wind up alone or sick, with sufficient funds, you could regroup and recover in a 5-star hotel, as opposed to a ward in county general hospital? Money's advantages are undeniable, but security isn't one of them.

If you think there's a way around that point, consider two familiar words: Bernie Madoff. Sifting through the catastrophic fallout in the wake of perhaps the greatest investment con ever, the truly heartbreaking accounts are of the widows, well past retirement, who lived comfortable lives knowing they had a cushion against unexpected expenses, and funds for the occasional luxury. Many weren't uncommonly rich, but they were secure in the belief that nothing could render them destitute. Madoff was highly regarded by the wealthiest people in the world.

His close friends and relatives entrusted their money to him, without reservation.

And you know the rest of that story, too. It's hard to imagine the pain of rebuilding your life at 75 years old with not a dime to your name, after you haven't thought about working in 40 years. Some of his victims will never recover. A few will thrive. What makes the difference? It may not be what you'd expect.

It's a fine philosophical yarn, to view crushing overnight change as a great opportunity to rebuild a better life. It's an uplifting premise when it's someone else's issue. But for the vast majority of us, it would hardly be a comfort to ponder all the possibilities if our own lives were in that much turmoil.

Nor would it be a salve to know that ultimately there is nothing you can count on outside yourself. When it's personal, the very notion is so horribly unsettling we'll depend on various external facets of our lives to be reliable constants. Our jobs, marriages, families, wealth, or whatever we hold dear; often will define us, and almost always will anchor us. But, when a grounding influence suddenly disappears from our lives, we're thrown into a crisis.

And for those facing the overnight evaporation of what has been their entire security base, it's a crisis of epic proportion, filled with despair and confusion. Fortunately, few individuals will endure such transformational losses.

Instead of a well-defined instant shock, for most of us, life becomes a slower long-term decline— a less recognizable, but equally debilitating, circumstance. Until we get to the point where we're clueless as to what to do next, we'll manage to keep it together to varying degrees. Our crisis will emerge more slowly, reaching full proportions when we hit that psychological wall and finally can't take it anymore (whatever "it" represents to each of us).

As Andra Willis plaintively sung, *"I'll dream of heaven and live in hell, 'til I can't take it anymore."* (One of the all time great country recordings, it never was a hit. Andra was formerly a singer on, of all things, *The Lawrence Welk Show*. From the song's first release as a soul tune done by Ben E. King, to a mellow rendition by Charlie Rich at the height of his popularity, nobody came close to capturing the despair of being trapped in ambivalence like Andra and the production team behind her on this 1973 Capitol Records release.)

Fortunately, most of us will not be in Andra's melodramatic state whenever we realize we can't take it anymore. But, regardless of how and when we reach that point, it will also not be the ideal time to hear about the wonderful opportunity before us. It will be a wound licking, mentally meandering, well deserved pity party, with wistful memories of our youth, prominently on the guest list.

Few in the room on career day knew precisely what they wanted to do with their lives after high school. In Chapter 4, we'll get to the emotional trajectory of those who did, which can be no less troubling. But for the rest of us, the future was a somewhat amorphous concept, long on expectations, short on details.

With varying degrees of consideration over the years, our belief in 'how life would be' served as a stabilizer, particularly during hard times. But, in the end, it was a deceptive and ineffective stabilizer, as evidenced by many of us who can readily absorb the difference between what we expected and what we got.

If you're currently feeling that your life is devolving bit by bit, you'll remain somewhere between 'getting by' and 'mired in misery,' filled with regret over what didn't happen, or perhaps what did, and if you're lucky— though you won't feel lucky when it happens— reality will eventually set in, usually in an unwelcome manner, at an inconvenient time, and you'll know you've got to make a change.

That's when things generally get worse. Later, you may be thankful for the opportunity put in front of you, but not while you're totally focused on what brought you to the dance— perhaps you've been fired, divorced, betrayed, or any number of insulting atrocities, life might have thrown in your path.

I should interject, nothing said here negates the possibility that the outward things on which you steadfastly rely will give you a richly fulfilling life with your first spouse, lucrative career, wonderful friends, and family. 'Happily ever after with nary a contrary thought,' does happen— but not to people who are reading books like this.

Unless you're a listener to my radio show who wants to know if I can conjugate a few verbs, or you're wading through what may appear as psycho-babble to get to the media stories used to punctuate the points; you're probably interested in what I have to say because you're searching for the missing link: Why isn't your life working? What can you do about it? How can you get to where you want to go? When will you find out where that is? It's similar to career day in high school— with a few wrinkles, literally and figuratively.

Chances are good, you've already read a few books touted as having "the answer." And chances are better, none of them did. Self-help tomes are comparable to Chinese food— you're very full after consumption, and absolutely empty a short time later. Ideas that read as if they're the revelation of a deep secret, and answers that look great on paper, essentially leave you unchanged. I think I know why, and what you can do. Many people have asked me to tell you.

More than any other request I've heard, is *'You gotta write a book!'* The implication is I've somehow got dirt on everyone, not to mention my own treasure trove of escapades, and I've got to commit all the details to paper. My standard retort has been, *"More people have to die first,"*

referring to the shower of lawsuits, rightly following from the living, if I dared to consider it, assuming I had stories worth telling.

Recently, the requests have been more numerous, and thankfully, more rational. While some just want to read the intriguing tales emanating from decades in radio that I can tell; others suggest I share the things I've learned about life, which have made a difference to them. So here it is: the world's first radio-history based, motivational book. I've lived the former. As for the latter— who better to uncover human nature, than a talk show host?

For the most part, adjusted adults don't sit at home and call radio stations. This is revealed with a certain amount of trepidation as I'd hate to discourage anyone from picking up the phone, and also with a caveat— for most listeners, radio is a time-shared activity. You're tuning in while you're doing something else. And if that something else is driving down the highway as thousands of truckers, the unsung heroes of American commerce, are doing nightly; what better way to pass the time than chatting with a friend? I'm honored many of you have considered me to be one.

Often the voice at the other end of the phone has a problem. Ex wives, family court, unruly kids, CPS, lousy bosses, adverse coworkers, unfair traffic stops, unwarranted raids, unseen foreclosures, bad landlords, ruined vacations— if you can think of it, I've heard it.

I'm flattered when callers think I'll have a suggestion. Generally I will. That's what years of talking to myself on the radio has provided: opinions about everything. It has also given me useful detachment, allowing me to avoid the emotional muck surrounding a dilemma, thus making solutions much easier to see. Those are not the issues we'll discuss here. They are the simple ones— specific problems, which can readily be addressed without much trauma, even by the biggest drama queens.

Radio doesn't lend itself to discussing life's real hurdles in any great detail. Even shows dedicated to advice, don't have that kind of time. When nothing short of reformatting your mental hard drive will work, you won't find the instructions in a two-minute phone call. With any luck, you might be helped by the subsequent pages, or at least have a good time reading the anecdotes.

But I'm not a doctor of any sort, or a certified expert in anything. I have no specialized training whatsoever, or much of any training that matters, beyond what comes from being a student of life. So, if you're facing something, which has you considering drastic action, including but not limited to suicide; stop reading and get professional help from someone very experienced and qualified. Don't take advice from a talk show host.

If you don't think you'll make it through the night, week or month; nothing I'll say here will be sufficient to help you. This is a disclaimer. It's also the truth, and I'm asking you to take it on faith, because if you're now in the depths of despair, I know you won't believe that anyone can help. I hope you'll trust me on this, and are willing to make an appointment, and will hang in there until you go to it. Nothing here is meant to supplant professional advice of any type, under any condition, but assuming you're not about to do something rash, I've got a few things to share.

Here's another disclaimer: no one can give you a secret, which simply by knowing it, and following a few associated particulars, will magically transform your life. I know that flies in the face of much of the self help genre, and all of the *New Thought* school, but alas, here's the *real* secret: understanding a concept intellectually will not give you the tools necessary to adapt it to your life.

The reason the diet industry is a multi-billion dollar business is because most people fail to lose weight or keep it off. A large number of them are so desperate to find a solution that they'll try any outlandish plan. Yet every

serious dieter knows the secret formula for magic transformation: eat 3,500 calories less than your body burns, and you will lose a pound. You can do that by consuming less, exercising more, or a combination of both. It's doubtful anyone would contest that basic physiological fact. Overweight people know it, and they believe it. And they're still overweight.

The secret formula of life is lesser known, though equally effective: properly direct your thoughts, and you will achieve your dreams. There are thousands of ways to say, *'what you believe, you will achieve'* and *'attitude is everything'*. Nearly every motivational author, speaker, and guru, has come up with their own twist on that notion, in a collectively huge body of work, spanning the last hundred and a half years. But, even if you are convinced of the absolute truth of it, translating the premise into a satisfying life is about as easy as knowing how to lose weight and actually doing it. Needless to say, there's more to it than that. But it's a great place to start.

Chapter 2
The Power of Belief

Never was a time more ready for the growth of what came to be known as the *"New Thought"* movement, than the turn of the last century. During an era when the marvels of electricity and telephony emerged, nothing seemed impossible. Amidst a host of newfangled inventions, it seemed to make sense— that there is an unseen force permeating all physical life.

The idea was hardly new in scope, being the underpinning of metaphysical and spiritual beliefs dating back to antiquity. But around a hundred years ago, it was somewhat novel in its personalized approach: that this force could easily be accessed by humans, and those who chose to live according to its "laws," could gain all manner of prosperity. This was the ultimate self-help plan, and adding to the mystique, the laws were restricted to the very few enlightened souls worthy of such knowledge.

Religions sprung up, philosophical societies formed, practitioners abounded. From bringing back the dead, to accessing universal intelligence and turning it into a supernatural servant of sorts, every out-there concept was fair game. Need it be mentioned, the time was also right for those who wished to pull off a mega-con? That's not to demean the many very sincere individuals, nor to negate their wisdom. There's a wealth of literature from this period and some of it is of great value.

But much more interesting than the movement's leaders were the results had by their followers. Some devotees demonstrated effects that were nothing short of miraculous, which assuredly provided comforting confirmation to their trustworthy counselors. Undoubtedly, it was stunned confusion for the certified con artists, when *their* disciples had equally amazing outcomes. But the

pertinent thing is the cons' victims occasionally did have astounding results. The key is not found in the intentions of the teacher. Success revolves around the belief of the student. What one believes, one conceives.

No one proved that better than Dr. John R. Brinkley. Whether he was the ultimate scammer or a gifted healer, his execution is a case study. The good doctor was not a metaphysician— such finer nuances were beyond him. He fancied himself a physician, no "meta" involved, but even that was a stretch. Whether he had a medical license at all is up for debate. But what he did have was tremendous timing and an unparalleled sense of marketing.

In 1918, he opened a clinic in Kansas, just as the infamous flu pandemic broke out. Previously, Brinkley was considered to be a charlatan by many, but his success at nursing the flu-stricken back to health, changed all that. Never mind that merely 2.5% of the folks who contracted the killer flu succumbed to it, when Dr. Brinkley's patients recovered, he was suddenly viewed with the utmost of respect for his ability to heal. As people who believed in his medicinal powers sought him out, Brinkley's notoriety grew. If you're looking for an example of a self-fulfilled prophecy, you've found it here. People got exactly what they expected— score one for the metaphysicians, none for the good doc. But no one believed more in Brinkley, than Brinkley himself. That's when he went off the deep end.

He'd always been interested in gonads, and held the dubious belief that a man's virility could be restored by replacing his testicles with those of a goat. As odd as it sounds, it wasn't a singular idea. The use of goats was somewhat novel compared to the more widespread hope from monkey glands, though the concept— that virility could be returned with an infusion of testes from God only knows what, was seen as plausible, at least by the desperate.

Belief is one thing. Acting on it is quite another. The

good doctor acted— performing operations on a growing number of people. There's some debate as to how willing the first patients were, but astonishingly the technique, if you could call it that, caught on. For most, the glands would be harmlessly absorbed as foreign matter by the body, and that was the end of it, physically. The less fortunate would die from various predictable complications.

Medically speaking, there was no way this procedure affected the libido, or much of anything else. Nothing that Dr. Brinkley did could have physically changed the virility of any of his patients. So, what explains the large amount of folks who swore they were improved by the technique? The power of belief.

You might be thinking that these patients were anything but intelligent or discerning, and you'd be underestimating the good Doctor's skill— at least at public relations. He somehow was able to convince all manner of people they would benefit, to the point that they thoroughly believed they did. Many otherwise rational souls confirmed the procedure gave them a 'glut in their strut,' so to speak, including the chancellor of the Chicago Law School who after the surgery, proclaimed himself feeling *'decades younger and getting more so by the day!'*

It was a result that by all medical accounts was impossible, but real enough to the chancellor for him to bestow an honorary doctor of science degree on Brinkley who wasted no time in publicizing his success. Satisfied customers were increasingly easy to find. (And so were failures but Dr. B. didn't mention those, and the dead weren't talking.)

As word of his miraculous talent spread, Dr. Brinkley came to the attention Harry Chandler, owner of the *Los Angeles Times*. As the story goes, Harry asked Brinkley to perform the 'goat gland' operation on his managing editor, and promised, if it worked, the paper would sing his praises; but if it went bad, he'd publicize that too. Brinkley

wasted no time in agreeing.

I can't find any details about the attitude of the hapless editor, leading me to speculate that newspaper jobs must have been hard to come by in the 1920s. But maybe the guy was like many, entirely willing. Regardless, Brinkley operated, and the results were proclaimed a success. By "success," it's probable that anything medically verifiable came down to the poor newsman not dying, no matter how much better he may have believed he felt. After Chandler made good on his promise to hype the doctor's success, the Hollywood elite were lining up outside his door.

Brinkley returned home and immediately involved himself with another unseen miracle: radio waves. He'd been doing well promoting himself in print, but after seeing radio in action in Los Angeles, he realized that taking his message to the air would be a quantum leap. He signed on KFKB. It was arguably, the first radio station licensed in Kansas, and indisputably, the first radio license lost in America.

The FCC vetoed Brinkley in a landmark decision, proclaiming it is not censorship to look back on past programming to determine if it was in the public interest. In effect, had the Commissioners ruled before the good Doc took to the air, they would have been censoring him by prohibiting what he wanted to say. By ruling after he spoke, they did not violate his right to free speech.

That standard is used to this day, and continues to have broadcasters swimming in murky waters, but it was clear in 1930 when the FCC decided Dr. Brinkley was not operating in anyone's interest but his own. The offending content was little more than the first infomercial. It was the *"Medical Question Box"* program, where Brinkley diagnosed letter writers and always concluded that one of his own concoctions, available by mail, would heal them. The only thing healed was his bank account. Remarkably,

that knowledge didn't stop people from seeking his advice— nor did it stop many of them from being healed in spite of it. Belief is a strong thing.

Brinkley knew the benefit of a few thousand watts. The concept of a few hundred thousand was irresistible. What's the loss of a license in a small Midwest town, when one has his sights set on broadcasting to an entire continent? Brinkley went south, literally, and convinced the Mexican government to give him the right to run a border-town radio station.

It didn't take much convincing. Mexico was furious over the number of US signals intruding into its airspace, and those in charge figured a little retaliation would go a long way— a very long way. XER, licensed to Ciudad Acuna, was heard in Brinkley's home state of Kansas, and well beyond. And Brinkley didn't even have to go to Mexico. He did the show from his clinic in nearby Del Rio, Texas.

Thus, Dr. John R. Brinkley paved the way for Wolfman Jack, and the sale of everything imaginable, though the good doc stuck to selling his own wares. His Del Rio clinic was, to put it mildly, a showplace— built entirely upon his adoring patients who thoroughly believed the marketing slogan, *"a man is only as old as his glands,"* and felt certain they were living proof of it.

If you're wondering what happened to those not possessing a fervent faith in Brinkley, it was what you'd expect. Critics felt none of the magic— physically or otherwise. As the 1930s came to a close, Brinkley attracted no shortage of debunkers, most notably the AMA, which was increasingly loud in slamming his methods— loud enough to break the spell of belief.

And so, the lawsuits kept on coming, and Brinkley started going, downward. Before it was over, everyone from the IRS to the US Postal Service sued him. And then he amassed another broadcast law distinction: bad enough behavior to have regulation named in his dishonor. The

Brinkley Act prohibits a studio in the United States from sending its signal to a transmitter in a foreign country for the purpose of being heard in America. That, however, didn't stop many who followed in the Doctor's footsteps, including an assortment of preachers specializing in belief.

There's perhaps another take on Dr. Brinkley. It's possible he was not the charlatan he was later made out to be. Radio vets, Ray Smithers and Jerry Lee Trowbridge, have been working on a documentary about Brinkley. Their research shows him to be a cutting edge clinician who was much more an early target of established medicine and the government that promoted it, than the architect of his own demise. Either way, the old Del Rio joke stands: *'What's the fastest thing on four legs? A goat passing the Brinkley clinic.'*

Whether it was Brinkley's abilities or the certitude of his patients, countless studies prove the medicinal role of faith. Though physicians will hardly shout the results from the rooftops, it is irrefutable: in blind trials, placebos occasionally work as well, and sometimes better, than the drug being tested. And in those circumstances, the reason is clear— the patient's belief is the overriding factor. Many doctors will choke on admitting it, but it's no less true. Strong belief can be a major, if not sole, determinant.

You've probably heard about people being given a terminal diagnosis and dying on schedule, or are aware of individuals who became gravely ill upon being told they had a fatal illness, and instantly cured after hearing it was a mistaken opinion. Some of the most revealing stories are also the hardest to believe. Medical literature is illustrative of such things, often entertainingly so, when describing the results of an encounter with a different line of doctors— witch doctors.

One account comes from Maxwell Maltz, whose 1960 best selling book, "*Psycho Cybernetics,*" is worth the read. Maltz was a plastic surgeon in New York who discovered that satisfaction with the outcome of cosmetic surgery was

less tied to the results themselves than the self-image of the patient.

In his research, Maltz documented the role belief played in the surgical process, particularly among patients who had serious defaults corrected. While some were able to start new, confident lives, others claimed nothing had changed; yet to onlookers a physical metamorphosis was evident. Maltz learned he was operating on two faces— the physical and the psychological, and if both weren't transformed, no amount of new or renewed physical beauty, would make a difference.

But nothing prepared him for what happened to Mr. Russell, a wealthy West Indian man who sought him out to have his lower lip reduced. Maltz mentioned it in *"Psycho Cybernetics,"* and detailed it in his 1955 book, *"Adventures in Staying Young."* After meeting Russell, and his girlfriend who impressed him as a gold digger, Maltz agreed to perform the operation under one condition: Russell would tell the gal, he spent his entire fortune on the procedure.

Upon learning the news, the woman informed Russell she never loved him, was leaving, and, for his stupidity in squandering his money, was putting a voodoo curse on him. Russell was highly educated and refined; but nonetheless, he was from the West Indies where talk of spell casting creates widespread fear. At first he discounted the threat, but then he felt a lump on the inside of his lip. When a local island doctor confirmed it was the dreaded "African Bug," the direct result of a curse, which would eat away at him until he was gone, it was all Russell needed to hear.

Suddenly, every physical nuance was a sign of his doom. When Russell returned to Maltz a few weeks later, it appeared as if he was dying, or at least had greatly aged. After inspecting the "bug," Maltz realized it was a bit of scar tissue. Explaining the facts to Russell, and removing the lumpy skin, Maltz watched his patient's transformation.

Once Russell saw the truth for himself, he began to reclaim his vitality. In total, it took about a month for Russell to go from robust to withered and back, with the only change (other than a miniscule piece of dermis), being his belief.

A similar account, from a wonderful book on elusive illnesses, *"Symptoms of Unknown Origin,"* by Clifton K. Meador, MD, easily tops Maltz' experience:

In 1938, Dr. Drayton Doherty was treating a hospitalized patient, a black man on the brink of death known as "Vance Vanders." No matter how many tests were run, nothing came back positive. It appeared what Vance insisted, that he was a goner, was true. Doherty was clueless as to what was medically happening, but happening it was. As the end appeared imminent, Vanders' wife confided in Doherty. She revealed with absolute conviction, her husband's impending death was the result of an unfortunate medical encounter— of the witch doctor kind. Nothing could save him, she said, adding, should it become known she revealed the curse, she and her children would perish.

Doherty wasn't sure what to do, but he knew if he didn't do something, Vance was going to die— and soon. He came back the next day with an idea and a prop. Enlisting the help of a nurse who was in on the ruse, he requested that all of Vanders' next of kin be by his bedside. When they were assembled, Doherty strode into the room and informed everyone he had learned of the curse, and had confronted the voodoo priest responsible. He told an elaborate tale of choking the facts out of the sorcerer to learn how the spell was cast, and what to do about it. The witch doctor, Doherty explained, had infused lizard eggs into Vanders' stomach. Of all that had hatched, only one was left, and it was eating Vance alive. But the cure was at hand, in the knick of time!

Signaling the nurse, Doherty ceremoniously took a syringe full of the guaranteed antidote, which, in reality,

was only guaranteed to make Vanders vomit. As Vance retched on cue into his bedside basin, Doherty reached into his pocket for a small plastic reptile. Slipping it past the notice of anyone present, he slyly put it in the barf bowl. Minutes later, with great fanfare, the doc joyously proclaimed that Vanders had expelled the deadly curse! Upon seeing the lizard, Vance reeled backwards and passed out. When he awoke, he was ravenous. Within a week, he was discharged. Nothing had changed, except his belief.

Dr. Meador became so interested in the concept that he did some investigating. Among his findings was the work of Walter Cannon, a renowned Harvard physiologist who first coined the term "fight or flight," in 1915. Interested in the body-mind connection, Cannon subsequently studied the phenomenon of hex deaths and concluded, such incidents can and did occur, but they were dependent on three invariable factors:

1. The victim, and everyone he knows, must fully believe in the witch doctor's ability to induce death.
2. Without exception, all known previous victims of the witch doctor, must have died.
3. Everyone the victim knows, must begin to act as if he was already dead.

Clearly, the sole factor here is belief— not your garden-variety belief, like we all profess to have about one thing or another. This is, a down to the last fiber of your DNA, belief— committed belief that doesn't remotely allow for any other conceivable outcome than what is believed. This is what our *New Thought* practitioners are discussing when they say "belief." It's mega-potent stuff. And it works every time, for death or life. There's only one problem: how do you induce that kind of belief in anyone, let alone yourself? Even the witch doctor's victims had to be surrounded by a solid support system for their views.

You've no doubt heard quotes along the lines of, *'Faith isn't believing the Lord may help you— it's knowing he will.'* What a blessing for those with that kind of knowledge. But most of us aren't that sure— about anything, probably, but certainly not about our own future or destiny. And more bewilderingly, most of us aren't remotely sure, how to become that sure. Telling us, "just believe," is as effective as Wolfman Jack's "Guaranteed Fly Killer."

Jack grew up in Brooklyn as Robert Smith, after Dr. Brinkley had left the earth, not to mention the airwaves. But that didn't stop young Bob from discovering the power of the Mexican border blasters. Listening late at night, under the covers, to XERF, the outgrowth of XER, which had become the most powerful commercial station in the world, he was fascinated. In 1964, life allowed him to be fascinated up close.

Bob wangled his way into a job there. Because of the *Brinkley Act,* he couldn't work in Del Rio. His show had to originate in Ciudad Acuna, a place that turned out to be the Wild West with a Spanish accent. To match the machismo he encountered, and not to dwell on the associated bullets, he developed the "Wolfman" persona, with howling heard 'round the world.

Jack never heard Dr. Brinkley on the air, but he quickly hit upon the same formula: selling virility. Among pieces of the original cross (suspiciously resembling toothpicks), last supper table cloths (table size oil cloth pictures of the last supper, not the historical cloth itself, which should have been obvious by the sheer number sold), the 12 volume set of the Holy Bible (no one wrote another 11, it was an illustrated adaptation of the King James Version)— and chickens: *'100 baby chickens, 50% guaranteed to be alive at time of delivery. Breed or sex cannot be guaranteed.'* As a kid I'd wonder who wanted to have sex with a chicken.

While Wolfman was talking about the sex *of* the chicken, not the likelihood of having it with the bird, the concept may not have been far from his mind given "Florex," a pill available solely from him that would, 'put a glide in your stride,' as it were. RIP, Dr. Brinkley. (A tribute to the power of belief is that after authorities pulled the product off the air for being nothing but a sugar pill, XERF got continual reorders from very satisfied customers.)

I passed on Florex, and the chickens, but the record packages from "Stan The Man in Shreveport Louisi-ann," and Ernie's Record Mart in Nashville, were irresistible. For some reason, so was the "Guaranteed Fly Killer." I got what they promised. If I followed their directions, it would not fail. What arrived in the mail, was two small blocks of wood— "Block A" and "Block B," and a brief instruction sheet: *'Place fly on Block A. Press Block B on Block A. Guaranteed.'* What could be simpler?

What could have been a lot simpler, was a hint about how to get the fly to remain on "Block A"— just as it would be a tremendous help if all those inspirational tomes mentioned how to find the level of belief needed to make their self-help recipes cook. Finding a personal goal in which you passionately want to believe, and then discovering what it takes to foster the amount of belief necessary to achieve it, is the ever elusive all encompassing missing link. And on that score, all the metaphysical life changing books, seminars, and schemes, bear an alarming similarity to Wolfman's fly killer.

I still haven't figured out how to get the fly to stay on "Block A," but I've never really tried. I've worked a lot harder on the illusive belief issue, hard enough that I think I can help you get to where you're going, regardless of how much you believe anything right now. It will be very helpful if you truly want things to be better, and more so, if you're committed to doing what it takes to make them so.

By committed, I am not suggesting you spend your

money on guaranteed enlightenment, anything that Wolfman Jack and his ilk sold, or a $10,000 retreat in a sweat lodge guaranteed to change your life, such as the notorious event which made good on that promise when two people in the heated tent died on the spot. Talk about your e-ticket to first hand spirituality!

Instant illumination is readily available to the gullible through countless lures, but I continue to ponder how anyone could try the "Psychic Pill," to say nothing of endorsing it on the radio, though one well-known late night host did, seemingly oblivious to the product's main effect— total damage to what was left of his credibility.

It's easy to find personalities to endorse anything. For some, they're so fearful of losing their jobs; they'll swallow any pill and the story that goes along with it. For a very few, notably, Wolfman Jack, it truly fits their image. The Wolfman took his role as an on-air pitchman to a bizarre art form, seldom seen off the midway. Hopefully the bulk of his audience viewed it as an act, rather than an endorsement (the renewals on those virility aids notwithstanding).

But there's a fine, or maybe not so fine, line between a great act and a two-bit huckster. Effective performers don't try to come close to it, much less cross it. For most that do, it's about money, and it can be huge, at least in the short term. I could have retired a few times over if I didn't let that pesky integrity issue creep into the formula. Part of it is personal— I couldn't look in the mirror if I were to recommend something I doubted. And part of it is tactical— one of the reasons I'm able to move a lot of product for the sponsors I accept is listeners know I won't mislead them.

Not that I haven't been asked. As the '90s came to a close, so did my brief run on a nationally heard late night radio show. There was no final straw— it was a damn hayloft. But one of the more humorous events was an altercation over endorsing Human Growth Hormone pills.

As a hard rule, I won't endorse any ingestibles, including the ones which work for me, because everyone's biology is different, and I hope listeners will seek personalized advice from doctors who know what they're doing, as opposed to taking the word of a disc jockey who talks too much.

But that aside, HGH, while praised for its outstanding results, can have a tremendous medical downside. As I explained to the gentleman asking me to read the copy, 'This is powerful stuff, not to be hawked across the board to everyone without regard to outcome.' I'll forever marvel at his response: *'Oh, don't worry, it's only herbal— it won't do anything.'* How that logic was supposed to be persuasive, is the real mystery.

Long before I was seasoned enough to reject that reasoning, or old enough to vote, I'd read whatever was put in front of me. Radio people are often asked if they remember the first words they ever uttered on the air. I do: *"Sue, I don't know what to do. Timmy's wet the bed again."* I played the part of "mom" in a commercial for the "Sta-Dry Enuretic Service." It supposedly stopped kids from wetting the bed. For all I knew, it was a cork. Or maybe a service that changed the sheets, but it didn't matter to me because I could hear myself on the radio. Of course, this was on an FM station, at a time when no one except good music aficionados listening on their McIntosh tube tuners, had an FM radio.

It wasn't too much later that I discovered the need to pre-read all advertising copy. It happened after an event that could only be termed undeniably sincere. Apparently I didn't want to lead anyone astray, or perhaps I was just too surprised at the words on the page. The commercial was for what, to me, appeared to be glorified tract homes. As I read aloud about the genuine lathe and plaster, I got to, *"starting at only $495,000."* This was many decades ago when the priciest areas of Southern California boasted upscale houses in the $60,000 range. You can imagine my

passion and intensity when I said, *"only $495,000."* It came out as a question and an exclamation simultaneously.

If ever inflection could have transmitted the phrase, *"Are you kidding me?!"* this was it, in perfect intonation. Quickly recovering, I went on to talk about fine woodwork and so on. Turns out I was wrong to question the value. On a whim, I priced a property in the neighborhood a few years ago: $6 million. Even with the downward real estate spiral, nothing nearby is going for less than seven figures, and none of them start with "1." In retrospect, I hope some listeners believed what I was saying, though I obviously didn't.

While escalating prices saved whoever bought those homes, don't expect to find any parallels in what comes from drinking the *"Karma Cola"* (as Gita Mehta aptly titled her book detailing Westerners seeking immediate enlightenment in all manner of improbable Indian venues). When it comes to genuine insight, you can't bottle it, and there are no quick fixes. There is an answer, but it's not esoteric. And even if you're without belief in anything right now, it will work.

But it won't be easy, so if you're not sure about doing the 'heavy lifting,' then feel free to keep reading for enjoyment. With any luck though, before you're through, you'll be motivated to make some changes. Change— the C-word, is coming up next.

Chapter 3
The Paradox of Change

Human beings will not change until the pain of remaining the same is greater than their fear of the unknown. It's a gross generality, but it's also almost universally the case: only when we reach the point where we feel there is nothing left to lose, will we consider making a substantive change.

One of the best real-world examples is found in the history of modern radio. By the time the '50s rolled around, it was a foregone conclusion: radio was dead. Television— radio with pictures— eclipsed it. When you realize what was on the air back then, it was an accurate assessment. Radio was block programmed, featuring soap operas to sitcoms, variety shows to dramas, and music. With TV, everything you heard, you also could see.

But as with any technological change, it wasn't an overnight transformation. Listeners did not instantly morph into viewers. Television sets were in comparatively short supply. While it was evident a migration was occurring, network radio remained quite profitable in the '50s— and that led directly to its downfall.

Executives knew listeners were leaving, but there was still enough audience for the programs they carried to attract significant revenue. Many owners were worried about the future, though none of them blessed with a network affiliation was willing to upset the current income stream to bet on future prospects. Not that any of them knew they had such prospects. They were all mired in 'that's how we've always done it' land, and while they may have been facing a questionable future, they had a comfortable present built on a glamorous past.

Independent stations were not in that position. Their post-television value had plummeted. Not helping the

situation, many were at unenviable dial positions with little power or daytime-only authority. By the coming of the '50s, it was possible to buy a station for well under $100,000, which is exactly what young Todd Storz did, financed by his father, the descendent of an Omaha beer brewer. A popular story about the reason Storz came up with the concept for Top 40 radio is often told. It's positioned as if the idea for the format came as a bolt out of the blue. Not so. Like a lot of successes, inspiration was born from desperation, made possible by the total lack of a downside in trying something new.

The Omaha World Herald newspaper had unloaded day-timer KOWH on Storz, and was glad to be rid of it. Initially Todd didn't know any more than the paper did, as to what to do with his purchase. That's the set up for the now-legendary tale:

Todd and one of his employees, Bill Stewart, retired to a bar in Omaha to discuss what to do with Storz' second acquisition, an AM station in New Orleans. Different from most patrons who have a few beers and leave, the duo was there all night.

Musically, at the time, pop standards were waning, as the stage was being set for rock and roll. Rhythm & Blues and Country & Western were melding, and the resulting sound from rockabilly to vocal group harmony, was infectious. No wonder patrons would play their favorites on the jukebox. Also no wonder, everyone picked the same few chartbusters.

Jukebox operators gave bartenders marked quarters to pump into the machine when customers weren't around, but there was no problem that night. The place was busy. Most people would stay long enough to down a couple brewskis and leave. But for those spending the entire evening— including Todd, Bill, and the waitress; they were subjected to the same handful of records over and over and over.

What happened at closing time is said to have changed the fate of radio: the waitress walked over to the jukebox, took a quarter out of her pocket— not a marked quarter, but a coin from her hard earned tips that night, put it into the box and punched up the same songs she'd heard all night. That supposedly gave Storz the idea for Top 40. It's a wonderful memoir, but not entirely true.

The account overall is real, but the realization wasn't a complete surprise. Todd's first glimmer of radio's future came courtesy of the Korean War, which broke out shortly after he acquired KOWH. Making the rounds of potential advertisers, he'd stop at various locations throughout Omaha and would overhear folks talking. Many had relatives fighting overseas. They were anxious to hear the latest from the front, so the conversation generally surrounded what would be on the evening news.

It hit Todd that there might be value in having hourly war updates. After airing them for a short period of time, it was plain that while news from Korea was important, there wasn't much of it. So Storz instructed his newsmen to pad with items of local interest. When the war ended, Todd removed the hourly updates, and listeners complained loudly. They no longer associated the reports with the war. They thought of them as hourly newscasts, and they didn't want to lose them.

With that, Todd learned first-hand, repetition might be desirable. Few radio historians know that story. Virtually all know about the waitress and the jukebox. It's highly possible that without the news experience, the music event might not have registered.

At a time when prevailing radio logic favored variety, Todd had strong reason to believe that repetition might be a major part of his future radio success. He'd gained further insight by purchasing a study done by the University of Nebraska, which confirmed some of his thinking and gave him cause to experiment further.

But what enabled Storz to prove his thesis was the willingness to try something new, which comes from having nothing to lose. When he picked up WTIX in New Orleans for $25,000, it was a low-power outlet at 1450 with practically no billing. Had it been thriving, would he have dumped a revenue-generating format, for an unproven gamble? At the very least, it would have taken more thought. And as numerous disappointments attest, if he attempted to preserve anything old while evolving into a new approach, it would have been fatal. "Evolve," in radio, is usually a six letter word for failure.

But with no risk to take, and a plan to succeed, Storz quickly made enough money to donate 1450 AM to the city, taking WTIX to his newly purchased spot on the dial at 690, which amply covered the market.

(Oh, if you're curious: many people have asked, why "Top 40?" Why not some other number? Some contend that Storz took the first column of a national music chart—but the reality is more basic. A competitor, WDSU, aired a popular program: *"Top 20 at 1260."* Relying on his experience with repetition, Storz decided to try it around the clock. Since 40 was twice the amount of 20, and it alliterated well with his 1450 dial position, *"Top 40 at 1450"* was born.)

Ironically, over the years, 40 was rarely, if ever, the number of current songs played on any Top 40 station, but the handle forever stuck. The format was so successful that no one was willing to change its name, much less the elements in it. People will not change until there is nothing left to lose.

Wherever you stand on Barack Obama, you might argue that his victorious presidential campaign centered on change, that the overwhelming demand for change by the public put him into office. And you'd be wrong. None who actively supported Obama's platform of change, embraced it as a mandate to reexamine their own views.

Supporters wanted others to change to conform to their perspective. Change was for the government or the opposing party, not for them. The Obama campaign was not unique in that way. Unwavering passion and conviction are the backbone of persuasive politics. But as Obama's public push was "change," his campaign unintentionally provides the stellar demonstration of how resistant we are to it.

Most of us are so entrenched in our own world-view, not necessarily politically but decidedly personally, that a change is not only difficult to make— in many instances, it's inconceivable.

To get it right, we've got to know who we are, where we are, why we're there, and where we want to go. And we're not talking geography. Those are tough questions, and until we get to the point of 'nothing left to lose,' will most of us be willing to ask them, not to mention contemplate an answer.

Some refer to it as "hitting bottom." When there's no way up through any path you know, you have to look for another route. It's no longer a matter of 'willing to change,' it's now about *having* to change, in order to survive. AA members often refer to "low bottoms" or "high bottoms." How bad does it have to get before you realize that nothing you're doing is making it better? Will you awaken before you lose your job or family, or will you be living under a bridge by the time you accept the need to change?

For many of us, when we find ourselves dissatisfied with life, we'll put an emotional bandage on it. Perhaps we'll quit a job, start a new career, leave a mate, or move across the country. But those are outward manifestations. And there is no shortage of people who appear to make countless changes, but always seem to wind up with the same outcome. To quote "Ride on Cowboy," by Alvin Lee: "*Nothing is different, just rearranged.*"

Radio is a notorious home for these folks. They were

so plentiful in the early days of Top 40, employment ads for disc jockeys often included the line, *"no floaters or drifters need apply."* That's not to say such flamboyant souls weren't entertaining. Many had exotically quirky personas and outfits to match, from turbans to tuxedos. Their names occasionally exuded all manner of potency. "The Mojo Man" comes to mind, though countless versions of the after-dark phantom populated late night airwaves.

Anyone in the business for more than 10 minutes back in the day, has at least a handful of great stories about these characters, and the amazing part of all of them is not the antics themselves, but the repetition and timing. As if on cue, a job ending event would occur, similar to the last several terminations, at almost the same point in tenure— if tenure can be used, when measuring weeks or months. *"I didn't know she was 14," "I wasn't drunk on the air," "I did not say that to a client," "I never did anything like that at the last personal appearance"*... If you can imagine it, it happened, and to some of these hapless creatures, it happened again and again.

As bad as jocks might have been, kiddie show hosts were aggregately worse. And when a performer was both, it was generally a recipe for disaster. One of my favorite radio denizens fell into that category more than once, and in every case the outcome was hilarious, unless you had the misfortune of being directly involved.

After a number of stops, my buddy wound up in Valdosta, where in addition to being production director for a radio station, he hosted the televised *"Creature Feature,"* on the weekend. Some viewers thought he *was* the creature, appearing as your basic overweight Dracula in tennis shoes. If that wasn't enough to drive him to drink, the Halloween remote schedule drove him— drinks in hand, right over the edge, literally. Everything might have been OK, except for the part about having to arrive in a hearse, inside a coffin.

To his surprise, it went quite well at the first six strip malls. Hearse pulled in, pallbearers jumped out, coffin lid rose, and up popped Count Dracula with prizes for the more delighted than frightened kiddies. But by the seventh location, the heat coupled with the movement of the hearse collided with his alcoholic intake. You can picture what happened next. Up went the lid, out came the Count, looking realistically white as he spewed projectile vomit upon the unsuspecting children and their startled mothers. Even in keeping with the Halloween theme, there was no explaining this. Dracula had to go.

Each job was going to be different. Inevitably, each was the same. While Dracula and his ilk were amassing more area codes than a small phone company, it never occurred to them that they were the contributing factor in their own demise. Automatically, they'd pick themselves up, dust themselves off, and start anew— with the only real change being their zip code. And so it would go, until they'd run out of addresses.

When no next job was on the horizon, the lucky ones were forced to re-examine their approach to life, and in the best-case scenarios, saw how they created their own misfortune. Only then, could they embrace real change. The good news for Drac is he did just that. Today he does post production for movies you've probably seen, and he's been doing it steadily and soberly for decades in Hollywood where all manner of temptation doesn't faze him.

In other circumstances, it might be a subconscious death wish that comes into play. One of my favorite odysseys in that camp involves a night jock I worked with in Florida who loved to answer the phones, hoping some very young lady would have a personal request. I'd be pleased to tell you this is an uncommon event at any station. That's far from true, but this guy took it to an art form until his self-inflicted demise. Usually he'd make it out of town before the child's parent or station management

caught up with him. But in this one instance, the only word that comes to mind is suicide. Here's what happened:

After arranging a date with a junior high student, he picked her up at the school playground. It sound like a cliché, but trust me, it gets better— or worse, depending on your perspective. You'd expect when the precocious child suggested taking pictures of the act, he would've thought twice, especially when she happened to have a Polaroid Instamatic in her purse. But this underage girl was not an undercover plant. She sincerely wanted to preserve her memories on film— which turned out to be as bad for our aging paramour as if she had been setting him up. At the very least, you'd anticipate he'd leave with all the prints. Not him.

He gave the kid half of the pictures, dropped her off near her home and headed for work. It took quite a while for her mother to find the photos in her underwear drawer, though it took her father about a minute before he called the police. Busted again.

You'd think that even without prior experience in this arena, he would never have told the arresting officers, *"but she wanted it."* When his lawyer came to bail him out and suggested no one who'd ever seen one prime-time detective show on television could have been dumb enough to say that, the jock replied, *"but I can't watch those shows, I work nights."* Not anymore. Separate from previous escapades, this work-related drama came complete with a trial and conviction. In lieu of jail time, he was forbidden from ever working with minors again.

The positive end to the story is because he was forced to start over, he reinvented himself with a stable marriage and impressive career. That sentence sounds a lot easier than it was, but if he hadn't accomplished it, a sentence is precisely what he would have faced. Avoiding jail is a good motivator.

It's plausible that deep down, our request-line Romeo

was trying to get caught. You'd think he had to be, because he was far from stupid. Without his arrest, he could have conceivably gone through another dozen radio markets with similarly unrewarding upshots, before hitting the infamous wall with nowhere to turn. Instead, the worse thing that happened to him turned out to be the best thing that happened to him. He was forced to change at a point in life where he was young enough to rebound and prosper.

For most of us, subconscious or otherwise, our dawning will not come courtesy of criminal charges. Perplexingly though, some of us will be acutely aware of what we're doing from the start and be seemingly powerless to stop it. A classic illustration was Roby Yonge.

Roby, the youngest guy ever hired at New York's WABC, was nothing, if not the subject of countless radio stories. It was no secret he had a partnership with alcohol, but what few realized is he was acutely aware of his pattern. Long ago, he confessed to me that he knew what he was doing every time. It was a conscious/unconscious reaction to boredom. He'd take it, whatever it was, for so long, until without realizing it at the moment, he'd commit the fatal act.

The one heard 'round the world on WABC's 50,000 watts resulted in Yonge being the youngest guy ever to be fired from the station. Although it might not be the most memorable WABC exit (Bob Dayton's salute to the bombing of Hiroshima arguably tops it), it was be the only time a jock was yanked off the air mid-shift there. Hired to work middays, within a year he found himself doing overnights. Roby was sorely disappointed. The alcohol emboldened him that night but as he'd attest for years, his firm belief in what he was about to utter lingered when he was fully sober. He felt it was a conspiracy that needed to be uncovered, hence he announced to a stunned multi-state area: *"The Beatle Paul may be dead."*

Roby was as good as dead and it took several hours

to revive the phone exchange serving the surrounding area. The program director removed Yonge from the building before the next newscast aired. While it is indisputable Roby believed what he said and felt strongly he need to say it, it is equally certain his mounting dissatisfaction with the way things were going at WABC was the long-coming catalyst, not his newfound knowledge of a mounting musical conspiracy.

Events at other stations pale by comparison, such as his comment after a drunk driving incident that had him slamming into the wall of a local movie theatre, in the station's unmistakably marked car: *"I always wanted to break into show business."* But what stands out is Roby's pattern.

Regardless of how many constructive ways exist to handle a situation, most of us default to the familiar— our comfort zone. We exhibit consistent behavior, and for the majority of people, that's an OK place to be. Our predictable response is appropriate and healthy, more or less. When falling into the 'less' category, we're generally able to reflect on our behavior and learn from our mistakes.

But for those not able to do that, those repeatedly auto-piloting themselves into the same fine mess again and again, their lack of reflection is a detriment to themselves and others around them. Examining their own behavior is beyond them in both pain and ability, ergo they have highly developed defense mechanisms. Often they're charismatic, creative types, some to the point of being sociopaths. But as likely, they're downtrodden scapegoats with well-developed justification techniques. It's easy to avoid introspection when it's someone else's fault.

There's a strong downside to it, but for those caught up in victimhood, it's an automatic response: something outside of their control is to blame, and they had no choice in their behavior. Much as frustrated computer users resort to a hard reset, victims tend to implode, ignorant of

their own involvement in their drama. They're blinking at the outcome of their actions, resembling DOS users of decades ago who stared at the 640K prompt, after hitting "control-alt-delete." Granted, sometimes it's better to chuck it all and start over, but it's hardly of use when starting over equals doing it again. And, again.

Unlike most pattern repeaters, Roby knew exactly what he was doing. And he was powerless to stop it. Successful outcomes require two things— awareness of our role in a given dynamic, and our willingness to change it. Both are beyond most of us until we're left with no choice other than confronting our actions. By recognizing his pattern, Roby was well on the way to where he needed to be. But it was of no value to him because he believed he could not change. Ironically, there's a good amount of wisdom in that. "The Serenity Prayer," circulated by Alcoholics Anonymous sums it up:

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

It's widely credited to theologian Dr. Rheinhold Niebuhr who used it to end a sermon around 1934. In testimony of its relevance, though not its authorship, are the many versions, in many languages, over many centuries. The concept goes back at least to Christian martyr, Boethius, in 6th Century Rome

But willing or not, there are some things you cannot change about your nature. For Roby, the key might have been to understand why he self-sabotaged. He knew how he did it, but it might have taken a team of psychiatrists to fully uncover "why." If he truly understood the dynamics of his inner demons, he may have been able to learn how to harness them. It's moot as Roby died shy of his 55th birthday without resolving the deep pain within. The

tragedy is that kindred to the bulk of the talented-troubled, he made throngs of us smile while he cried alone.

Most of us are not quite that anguished, though that too is largely moot. What's central, is attitude: if you're willing to change the things you can (which is no small commitment in itself), for every facet of your nature working against you that you cannot change (and there will be some, regardless of how determined you are); there is a workaround that can make those facets manageable, if not a way to transform some of them into assets. But first, you've got to get a handle on what really matters.

Chapter 4
The Irony of Goals

It's often been noted that life is what happens while you're making other plans. Though it's a wonderfully sardonic assessment, it overrates the human condition. For most of us, if we drove our cars the way we planned our lives, we couldn't get out of the garage.

That would be fine if going with the flow got you where you wanted to be, but seldom does it. At the risk of pointing out the obvious, if you don't know where you want to go, the chances are good you won't get there— and almost guaranteed, the trip will be less rewarding than it could be. There's a great argument for being in the moment, that life is a journey not a destination. Undoubtedly, we would all be much happier if we could enjoy the ride. We'll talk about that in Chapter 9. Details aside, it's infinitely more difficult to remain in any moment, if you aren't ready to deal with what comes after it.

On the surface, it would seem that having a goal would be your biggest asset. Assuredly, having a specific destination, and a map to get there, will give you unparalleled focus. But, the majority of people blessed with yearning for a particular goal aren't prepared for what happens when they attain it. That's one thing about goals— you'll reach them or you won't. And to cut to the alarming truth: not reaching your goals can be the more rewarding scenario. For those who can enjoy the journey, living a life with a specific quest provides a framework of hope and direction, which allows us to blossom and thrive, regardless of the ultimate outcome.

Most of us equate the failure to reach a cherished goal, with a plethora of despondent emotions evoking deep sympathy from our friends and associates. We don't apply compassion to those who fulfill their dreams. They got

exactly what they wanted, what could be better? Therein lies the irony, because once a long term goal is achieved, and once the thrill of victory fades, it's virtually guaranteed that an emptiness will fill all the places where the dream used to be— and the bigger the dream, the deeper the emptiness. It's easy to muse that we'll gladly handle that problem, but for those actually doing so, it's anything but easy.

Radio provides poignant examples. Most disc jockeys knew by junior high they wanted to be on the air. They were the smug kids in the back of the room on career day. Filled with ambition and drive, their after-school activity was hanging around the radio station, doing anything for anyone, just to get inside the studio. Those who would succeed generally had very specific goals. What they couldn't realize is they'd reach those goals early in life, if they reached them at all. And when they did, they'd be in for a cruel awakening.

Robert W. Morgan found out first-hand. In college, in the mid-1950s, in Wooster, Ohio, he had one goal: to be the #1 morning man in Los Angeles. He made it by the time he was 32. At first it was an amazing high to have everything he ever wanted, but slowly the rush was replaced with a creeping dullness, increasingly assuaged by alcohol. *'Is this all there is, and if it is, why am I increasingly unhappy about it?'* he ruminated. A year later the problem hit him. He no longer had a goal. *"There was nothing to fight for anymore."*

Countless jocks have been in the same place. It's equally true for employees in any profession. If you're able to reach your lifetime goals by the time you're around 30, what's next? Regarding radio, the answer to that question will define not only your career, but also the quality of your life.

In Robert's case, pinpointing a new goal wasn't difficult. Being on the air was his passion, and there were

significant mileposts he still wished to achieve. Each one would be a step along the bigger journey that was a lifetime, lucrative radio career. Planning it out, Robert felt his next logical move would be transitioning from teen jock to adult personality. KHJ, the first choice for kids, was viewed with distain in many quarters, as were all rock and roll stations. Advertisers who might hire a radio talent to do voice-over work were hardly recruiting rock jocks.

But MOR (Middle of the Road) stations, such as KMPC in Los Angeles, were widely respected. For their announcers, it was the quickest route to gaining a major media presence. From television to movies, networks to print, KMPC opened doors. Robert W. Morgan wanted to walk through them.

That's when he discovered that being #1 was not enough. The guy in charge of KMPC told him point blank, he needed MOR experience before he'd be considered. Another executive may have not required it, but by being unbending, KMPC management gave Robert a goal. He left for Chicago where he did mornings on WIND to gain MOR experience. A year later, he returned to Los Angeles, though not yet to KMPC.

Morgan found himself back on KHJ, but this time rather than the emptiness he previously felt, he was reinvigorated with dreams of doing mornings across town. The circuitous road to that post was filled with incessant complaints, belying his happiness over having a goal to which he was dedicated. He joined KMPC as a part-time talent in 1976. In 1979, he was given morning drive. Robert celebrated his victory with the wisdom that instead of it being a destination, it was a midpoint on a bigger journey, which included bigger salary goals, national exposure, and multi-media plans.

The good feelings, however, did not extend to Morgan becoming filled with joy about life. He had an unhappiness down to his core, but opposed to being torn apart by his

misery, Robert was able to use it as the impetus for working harder and gaining more recognition. While he was crying alone, he had the unique ability to make the rest of us laugh together.

Ronnie Grant is a poignant example of goal betrayal. Ronnie's dream was to be on the air in New York City. First, he had a few other desires to fulfill. Saying that Ronnie took planning to new heights is an understatement. He wanted to work at Miami's WQAM in the 1960s, but the problem was twofold. WQAM rarely had openings, and Grant knew he was not sufficiently experienced to fill one, if it did arise.

Doing a little research, he learned that the owner of WQAM, Robert H. Storz, was a patriot. He was the father of the company's founder, Todd Storz who died unexpectedly in April 1964. With six radio stations across the country, Robert ran a tight ship. Among his rules (or ultimatums depending on where you stood), was that any employee drafted into the military would find a job waiting for them upon their return to civilian life.

Grant realized his draft number would soon be up, and while he might not be ready for WQAM, he could be hired at another Storz Station: KOMA in Oklahoma City. He got the job, and waited. Uncle Sam did the rest. After Ronnie's armed services stint was over, Storz made sure WQAM had a place for him.

It was even easier for Grant to find himself in New York a few years later when a new station entered the market. WWDJ was licensed to New Jersey, but it blanketed Manhattan with Top 40 music, and that was enough for Ronnie. He made it! Similar to Robert, he felt good for a while. And then he felt rudderless. With no firm direction in mind, after the WWDJ job ended, as almost all on-air gigs inevitably do, Grant came back to Miami, first to Y-100 and then, to WMYQ.

Though both FM stations were very successful,

Ronnie felt none of it. Eventually he quit and returned to his hometown, working in the logging business. He spent several years alone and depressed until it dawned on him that he spent his 20s building up his career, and in his 30s, after leaving New York with no goals in mind, he subconsciously tore it all down so he'd have something to rebuild again. That introspection explained Grant's current position, but it did not extend to how he could regroup and move forward.

It's uncertain Ronnie ever found the answer. On the surface, it appeared he had a new goal— station ownership, which he achieved in the 1980s, in Greenwood, Mississippi. The challenges of owning a small market station can be many, as can be the rewards. Sadly that was not enough. He took his life in 1985. For Grant, the high he felt in targeting and reaching a lofty goal, was replaced with an unrelenting emptiness he was never able to fill.

On paper, Roby Yonge lived every radio guy's dream. Who wouldn't want to be the youngest full-time guy on WABC? The problem is it wasn't Roby's goal. Roby fancied himself a surfer, which, while more than a small stretch, was his persona in Miami where he worked prior to New York. His goal was Los Angeles. He wanted to be on KHJ. But he didn't know anyone there, and he did have a conduit to New York. Too good a conduit as it turned out.

Whether Roby knew at the time he was an alcoholic, is not the point. He behaved like one, continually taking the path of least resistance without much thought, often with none at all. While he was on the air in Miami, the daughter of one of WABC's biggest sponsors fancied him. She convinced her dad to pave the way for Yonge in New York, and the old man went all out.

The superhighway to WABC did not include the program director hearing Roby on the air. Yonge sent a tape. Except the tape wasn't a random recording of his radio show. It was a studio production, edited together to

be flawless, much more flawless than he could ever have hoped to be. The gal's dad didn't care as long as his little girl was happy.

Before Yonge could get to New York, dad's "little girl" was miserable. Roby married someone else and took his new bride to his new home. Superfluous to note, Mr. Big Sponsor was not around to bail him out when trouble came (and you know it did). If this was anyone else, you'd have reason to believe self-sabotage was his goal. But goals were at best amorphous for Yonge, even when sober.

He never found anything to passionately pursue. While the life that happened to Roby might have been the goal of numerous talents, it left him cold. After he reached New York, his downward spiral was evident. By the 1980s, he was enabled by a steady voice-over career. That his commercials for Levitz Furniture paid all his bills was both a blessing and a curse. It allowed him to live a comfortable lifestyle, but didn't force him to deal with the core issue in his life: lack of direction. And he knew it.

In 1984, we talked at length. Roby joked that he had so much to outlive. He laughed about becoming an anonymous newsman. *"Gib Swen. Big News spelt backwards,"* but noted that *'they're hiring younger and younger kids now.'* Looking forward, Yonge thought maybe he, *'could start a radio retirement home for old announcers—it doesn't have to be on the air. Just put up a tower and hire groupies to hang out by the building. Have secretaries write hoards of fan mail with everyone's name misspelled properly. Of course there'd be jingles…'*

He admitted he was, *'confused and overwhelmed. I'm sitting here surrounded by hundreds of airchecks, ghosts of my past. Last year I put up a Christmas tree and set out all my cards. My housekeeper was impressed by all the big names. I didn't tell her the cards were 15 years old.'* Roby wondered if perhaps it was time to contemplate all his accomplishments, but sheepishly added, *'that's all bull, isn't*

it?' He never broached what it would take to define a path worth pursuing. Yonge died a decade later in a shabby motel room, alone and unemployed. But that's not the saddest irony of his colorful life.

When Roby was a well-known Miami talent in 1965, he referred to himself as *"The Big Kahuna."* He got the name from the old *Gidget* movie from 1959 where "*The Big Kahuna"* was the leader of the surfers. It was somewhat of a joke due to his lack of surfing expertise, and a total joke due to the lack of tide in South Florida, but it caught on.

Subsequently, Bill Drake, the architect of KHJ in Los Angeles, was vacationing in Miami, listening to Roby use the Kahuna handle. KHJ was the 'holy grail' to Roby, but sadly, it was not Yonge that caught Drake's ear. Bill thought *"The Big Kahuna"* depiction sounded cool and was quick to share it with KHJ program director Ron Jacobs. As a Hawaii native, Jacobs was very familiar with it.

"The Big Kahuna" has Hawaiian origins predating white man's arrival, much less his fascination with surfing. But it didn't click until Drake heard Roby use it on the air. Instantly, *"The Big Kahuna"* became a promotion and publicity fixture on KHJ. Painfully ironic, Roby was never considered for the one thing he wanted, though his alter ego name was snapped up instantly, and remains alive to this day, now on KRTH in L.A.

Joey Reynolds was also living someone else's dream, but he realized it when he could do something about it. Not that it would be easy. Embracing sobriety in middle age, Joey not only discovered he was achieving another guy's goal; he found out that his friends, choices, and proclivities, were likewise, not his.

For Joey, getting straight led to a complete change in his outlook. Earlier he had been a Top 40 legend, most notably in his hometown of Buffalo, where he was heard up and down the eastern seaboard, doing nights on WKBW. Countless personalities have credited Reynolds as their

inspiration, but for Joey it was a torturous existence, calmed only through inebriation. The end of the job came with him nailing his shoes to the general manager's door. The accompanying note said *"Fill these."* (They couldn't—at least not for a decade until they got Jack Armstrong.)

Reynolds drifted through many major market gigs with similar, if not quite as spectacular, endings; until he decided that he was no longer interested in being on the air. The business was changing, AM was dying, and Joey was in mourning. Angry and hurt, he divorced radio and opened a production company. As you might expect, it failed. Reynolds returned to broadcasting, but this time to management, a chore for which he was uniquely ill suited. The crisis that followed led to his sobriety, but brought him no closer to finding himself.

Married and starting a family, Joey felt he should opt for the security of the corporate world. He took a job with 20th Century Fox. It was not a good fit. Nor was his role as president of Wayne Newton's company.

To digress, Newton's story is the perfect example of failing to reach a goal, but nonetheless netting tremendous success. Wayne desperately wanted hit records, but never topped the charts. On stage, however, his star shined. No one has matched his track record as a Las Vegas headliner. Regardless of the affect this dichotomy had on Wayne's persona, while witnessing it, Joey saw the need to formulate appropriate goals and the resolve to stick to them.

Coming away from the Newton experience with a renewed focus on being a performer, Reynolds ended up doing overnights in Denver, simulcast on KOA radio and television. It didn't last, but his desire to be behind the mic, did. He returned to Philadelphia and then New York. His career was marked with almost as much time off the air as on it, but his willingness to do whatever it took to remain a radio personality, eventually paid off in a position he held

for over 14 years, hosting a nationally syndicated overnight show on the WOR Network.

It's starting to sound as if you better define your own lifelong goal structure or else— with "else" too horrible to contemplate. But that's not always so.

You may be among the lucky ones, like Gary Stevens who seemingly had a charmed life. Gary's career began alongside Joey Reynolds'. Both, about the same age, hailed from Buffalo, and found themselves in Miami, where Frank Ward, a former Buffalo radio programmer, was working. Ward, who programmed WAME, and then a new upstart in town, WFUN, hired both men.

When Joey returned to Buffalo, Gary moved on to WIL in St. Louis, an influential radio station that spawned numerous talents including Dan Ingram. For Gary, New York was the goal. He got there after moving from WIL to *"Lucky Keener 13,"* WKNR in Detroit. What Keener lacked in signal, it made up for in sound. Gary joined several accomplished broadcasters, and it wasn't long before he began a campaign to get Ruth Meyer, the program director at New York's WMCA, to hire him. In 1965, she did.

At 25 years old, Gary was doing nights in Manhattan. In contrast to the previously mentioned talents, he enjoyed himself immensely. At the height of the British Invasion, Gary married an English stewardess. In 1968, as AM radio was changing, instead of a pity party, he moved to Switzerland. Two years later, it was announced he was returning, as the new general manager for KRIZ in Phoenix.

If you're wondering how that could have possibly happened, you are in very good company. For someone who had been a nighttime rock and roll disc jockey, with absolutely no programming, sales, or management experience, to be named as a general manager of anything was unparalleled. It seemed as if the writer of the 1970 article, announcing Doubleday's purchase of KRIZ, left a few career moves out, when he said*: "Former WMCA air*

personality Gary Stevens will be general manager." But not only did Gary get the job, he got it over one lunch with Doubleday's then-president, Dave Scribner. (To this day, some of us wonder what the pair could have been eating.)

Gary's career continued in the same auspicious manner. He moved to co-owned KDWB in Minneapolis before assuming Scribner's role as president of the company. From there, at the perfect moment in the 1980s, he segued to a position with a major investment bank, before going out on his own as a station broker, negotiating many of radio's highest priced deals.

It's not that Stevens didn't have goals, as much as he had the ability to change them as needed. He had an uncommon combination of focus and flexibility. Or perhaps the reality is that his real goal was as unapparent as it was unwavering. I'm amused to recall a discussion we had in 1985, about his move from Doubleday to media financing. Among Gary's biggest concerns was whether he'd still have his name and picture in the trades all the time, if he took the gig. The answer was yes. He'd also have a much bigger bank account, though that never seemed to be his primary motivation. Maybe it wasn't so much that Gary identified his goals, as it was that Gary understood himself.

While it's a given that finding a goal, which captures you down to your basic essence, one you are compelled to passionately pursue under any condition, will result in a purpose driven life, rich with experience and expectation; there's another way to thrive and prosper. Gary Stevens unwittingly discovered it. You don't have to know exactly what you want in order to find happiness and satisfaction, but you do have to know precisely who you are.

Chapter 5
The Science of Wisdom – Part One
Dedication

Decades ago, while writing for *Billboard Magazine*, I ran into every manner of radio person. Some impressed me with their intellect and creativity, others with their persistence and competence, and a few for being utterly clueless. There were times I had to wonder whether their daddy owned the station employing them. That was practically the situation with the man in charge of the CBS-FM group. His father was a high-ranking company executive. I once publicly declared that with this guy's programming skill, he couldn't get cops to listen to the police band during a riot. Tact was not my strong suit—still isn't.

My most memorable conversation with this fellow, came at a radio convention around 1983. The topic was the lackluster performance of his Los Angeles CHR station, KKHR, compared to KIIS-FM, which was on its way to owning the market. (CHR, Contemporary Hit Radio, was the name used when the Top 40 format came back to prominence in the '80s. Regardless of moniker, the idea behind the approach is to play the biggest mainstream hits, whatever they might be. It's not as easy as it sounds.)

So there I was, berating this hapless soul for how poorly his station was doing. One of my points was that the music did not reflect the market. Yes, it's tough to know what to play in Los Angeles, since L.A. is 90 suburbs in search of a city, one very different from the next. But you can figure it out, especially if you know where to do the research, which CBS clearly didn't, when it came to CHR.

They were much closer, in their previous stance as a mellow AOR station, in large part because they were comfortable with the tastes and lifestyle of their target

audience. But with their new format, it was as if no one at CBS noticed they would need to appeal to a group of people alien to them, let alone recognized that they couldn't fathom how to do it. There was much more to be said, and I was ready to say it, but this media giant chose to deflect my comments with a sharp interjection that floored me: *"How were we to know that KIIS would go CHR?"*

I was incredulous, but managed to blurt, *"Gee, I don't know, I guess you could have turned on a radio. KIIS changed formats a year before you did."* I remain mystified about what conditions could have possibly existed that would have caused the guy to overlook a hugely successful competitor when setting up his station. But wouldn't it be nice if life's wisdom was that simple— that everything we need to know was right in front of us, if only we'd look?

For most of us, it isn't that simple. "If only," is usually a past tense concept, an after the fact dawning. It's often a painful regret over what we didn't know when we needed to know it. In the best cases, experience will bring us hard-earned wisdom. Commonly, looking back on those "learning opportunities," we'll have misgivings. If only we'd handled ourselves differently. If only we had that vital piece of the puzzle, we would have made other choices. If only.

But you can know what to do, if you know where to look. If you've got a well-defined goal you're pursuing, you will weigh anything you might want to do against your ultimate desire, and you'll likely make an appropriate choice. But if you don't? Even if you're bereft of ambition, not to mention inspiration, you can access a similar framework from which good decisions may spring— if you're willing to develop it.

What I'm about to ask you to do will create a decision-making tool, and many of you won't do it. You'll probably read through the next paragraphs, intellectually understanding the premise, but not embracing the exercise. If you're among the few that will take the time and effort to

follow through, I can reasonably guarantee the results will help you in ways you won't expect. You may doubt it, but you won't know until you try.

I want you to make four lists. You're never going to show them to anyone. How accurately you formulate them will determine how well they'll work, so take your time. Live with them for a while; revise them before you're finished. Look at them when you're in various moods.

Do not consider anything external to you. Don't think about a particular situation or person. For instance, if you want a job at Eli Lilly in Indianapolis, think of why you want a job there— you want to work at a major pharmaceutical company, or have a job as a research scientist, live in a large population center, the Midwest, or whatever the Lilly job represents to you.

Also, do not consider what anyone else in your life wants or needs, even the people depending on you directly. This is a thoroughly selfish task, and again, no one else will see the results. Be brutally honest. There's no right or wrong. This is not a character test. It's a neutral and non-judgmental mirror that will tell you who you are.

The first list is very short: *Things I must have in my life.* There might be one or two items on it. They are your non-negotiables: things essential to your happiness— without them, you will not thrive. It's possible nothing comes to mind, but most of us will have a couple of basics, central to our satisfaction with life. Something may be trivial to others, but if it's to the bone essential to you, it goes on the list.

The second list is very long: *Things I would like to have in my life.* They're not absolute musts, but you would enjoy having them. Don't worry about prioritizing anything; just list whatever comes to you that you think would make your life nicer. It can include where you'd prefer to be, who you'd rather be with, but again, do your best to stay away from specifics. Instead of saying, 'I'd like to marry Joan,'

think of the qualities Joan embodies, which you want in a mate, and put those on your list. Perfectly fine for this list to contain hundreds of items, though for the majority of us, it will be measured in dozens, if that.

The third list is also very long: *Things I do not want to have in my life.* Not the total deal breakers, just things you'd rather not have to handle.

The fourth list, as the first, is very short: *Things I cannot have in my life*— these *are* the deal breakers, the things you will never accept. Similar to the first list, it's possible nothing will be included, but for many people, there is an item or two.

By the way, there's a school of thought that says eliminate the negatives and list everything positively. In other words, if you want to say, 'I do not want to live in an area with snowy winters,' instead, state it as, 'I want to live in a warm climate.' But it's hard enough to think about what's important, as it is. There's a solid reason for the anti-negative stance, and a time and place for it too. For now, it's counterproductive. For most of us, it's easier to talk about what we don't like, so go for it.

After you've completed all four lists, you can put them to use. Any specific choice can be compared with what's important to you. You may not draw an instant conclusion, but you'll have immediate insight into whether whatever you're considering is worth a closer look.

I'll give you a personal example. In 1992, after being out of work for a year, I got a job offer from Rockford, Illinois. My first reaction was, no possible way. Rockford is around market #150. I'd never worked in a town that small, even when I was starting out in radio. It was almost insulting to consider. But after a while, the length of my dry spell and the lack of options, led me to believe that I had no choice but to investigate it. At first, I was somewhat hostile to the idea. Then I got out my lists.

Nothing violated my 'must haves' or 'cannot haves.'

One of my 'cannots' was a job that started in the morning. A 'must' was a certain salary level— an amount I never would have believed a small market could pay. The job undeniably was a good fit for the must/cannot lists. Still, it was a bit disappointing I couldn't discount it. On an emotional level, I wanted no part of Rockford.

As I looked at the next two lists, what I wanted and didn't want, it hit me that a lot of what I wanted, and almost none of what I didn't, matched. Things I hadn't realized— such as 'prefer small town living within an hour's drive of a major metropolitan area,' were direct hits. Ultimately, I decided to go. Would I have done so without the lists? Maybe out of sheer economic necessity, but I would have gone with a losing attitude, resentful of my fate, instead of looking forward to the experience.

Even with all my forethought, I couldn't have imagined what I would encounter. It wasn't on any list, but it should have been. I've mentioned this on my radio show a few times because it was so personally profound: going to Rockford enabled me to grow as a broadcaster. Looking back on it, I suspect it was ignorance, not arrogance, which had me missing that point. I couldn't see how any specific situation would have a disproportionate effect, one way or the other, on my performance. My innocence worked in my favor. Had I known what I was walking into, I would have walked the other way.

The dilemma for small market talk radio is a dearth of callers. Having come from two 50,000 facilities, KOA in Denver and KFI in Los Angeles, I was used to the opposite. On KFI, giving out the phone number was sufficient to have every line in use. Callers make the job easy. They can cover a multitude of sins including the total lack of preparation. As long as the host is fairly glib, the callers will generally give them all the ammo they need to do a credible job. But when you get on the air expecting audience participation and the phone doesn't ring, you've got a problem.

The prevailing talk show format at the time was pretty simple: lay out an impassioned point of view about one current topic of interest and invite debate on it from listeners. But when they didn't call? There's only so much you can say about any one thing, less you want to say, and less still that the audience wants to hear.

I was a quick study. The one thing the few folks who would phone the station wanted to discuss was the school board. After fleshing out that topic in a myriad of unimaginable ways, I began to threaten non-callers with obscure R&B oldies. I played a few, such as "*Should I Cry*" by The Concords, followed by assurances that I had many more just like it, and I'd spin them all, if they didn't pick up the phone. They didn't. I didn't make good on my bluff, since I knew that they could change the station.

In reality, with WROK, you need not change the dial to hear another station. If you listen closely in Rockford, you'll hear Chicago's WGN on the same frequency. It has to do with harmonics. WGN broadcasts on 720. That means it's going to have a remnant signal on 1440, because it's a multiple of 720. 1440 is WROK's assigned position. WGN has 50,000 watts. WROK has 10 percent of that in the day, and a mere 270 watts at night. Even in the WROK parking lot after dark, you can hear WGN behind it.

Though few listeners would notice that phenomenon, all of the big Chicago talk stations clearly covered Rockford on their own frequencies. Suffice it to say, there was plenty else to hear, if I chased away what audience I had.

I had two choices (other than quitting or finding music, more suited to the taste of my listeners and playing a lot of it). I could continue to frustrate myself, expecting calls that weren't coming, or find a way to do a talk show without them. In under a month, I chose the latter in an attempt to protect my sanity. I arrived five days a week, ready to do a topical talk show for four hours, without taking one call.

I went where no host had previously gone on an issue-based show. In a conversational style, I included a huge amount and variety of timely topics from sources ranging from the Wall Street Journal to the Weekly World News. I talked to one listener, hoping more than one was hearing me, focusing on one-on-one intimacy. In short, I was sharing the world with a friend, and not tremendously concerned with the results.

My first hint that it was working, came on *"D-Day"*—"Dorito Day," where I was charged with appearing in public, giving away bags of chips to anyone who might show up. I figured I'd be eating Doritos for months, based on caller volume, but when I got to the advertised location, I was mobbed. It was the middle of a weekday, so it wasn't surprising this was mostly a crowd of housewives, but the enormity of the crowd was so different from any expectation I could have rationally had that I found myself stammering, in what could best be described as a pleading voice, as I asked, *"Why don't you call?"* The response is imprinted on my mind: "*We don't want to interrupt you, dear."* To this day, I invite listeners to interrupt the show. Now you know why.

Fortunately, the gathering wasn't a fluke. The ratings reflected its size, and more. I was making decent money before the numbers came out. After they did, I got a raise. But the real surprise came when I left a year later.

I returned to Southern California, replacing Bill Ballance in San Diego. KFMB was a well-respected station with a good signal, enjoying high ratings in a major market. This should have been comparable to KOA and KFI, but it turned out to be another WROK. I worked nights. The station carried the Padres, who at the time were dead last in their division, the National League West. If there was a position lower than last, they would have held it. But not only did KFMB air the baseball games; like most stations that carry play-by-play, they also ran a long post game

program, rehashing the action for the sole purpose of amassing additional ad dollars. By the time my show started, it was about 45 minutes past a losing game, by a losing team, which interested no one. If you don't think my training in caller-free radio paid off, you aren't paying attention.

I shined in an arena where it would have been on everybody's radar had I failed. And I can thank a year in Rockford for that. While the lists guided me to go to Rockford, the lessons I learned were a gift. Nothing I pondered could have led me to expect results that weren't in my consciousness. And therein lies the weakness inherent in any list most of us will make initially: it will be largely reflective of our reactions to the experiences we've already had, rather than predictive of what we might desire, among the countless possibilities still unknown to us.

Radio pioneer, Todd Storz, instinctively understood the role previous experience plays in our choices. One late evening, during a discussion with a handful of notable colleagues, Todd pondered moving the hourly news. Because competitors ran their newscasts at the top of the hour, Storz aired his, five minutes earlier. The logic was that the bulk of the Top 40 audience tuned the news out, therefore the listeners he'd automatically lose when the news started on his stations, would be regained five minutes later when the competitor's news began and he was back to playing music.

After debating whether his premise was correct, talk got around to the best time to air news. All was civilized, until an associate suggested polling the audience to determine their preferences. Storz quickly dismissed the idea, retorting, *"People don't know what they like. They like what they know!"*

Whether Todd was speaking about the industry he well understood, or reflecting philosophically on the human condition, is lost to history. But intentional or not, Storz

hit upon a basic tenet of psychology: with rare exceptions, we cannot envision what we do not know exists. That's inescapable, but what's hidden, is how it binds us.

The economic fallout since the announcement that America was on the precipice of disaster in 2008, provides too many examples of our inability to factor what we've never experienced. Millions who have worked their entire adult lives in lucrative positions, increasingly are finding themselves unemployed, with nothing in sight. It's not unreasonable to feel defeated after months or years of answering help wanted ads. But more than defeated, some of us feel lost. We simply can't imagine what else we can do. Society understands that crisis.

For those of us still on the job, there may also be a hitch. Decreasing levels of satisfaction have become the norm. The disquietude may spring from seeing no advancement on the horizon, the toll of taking on the workload of several laid-off colleagues, the feeling of futility in every task we undertake, the joylessness behind even the biggest accomplishment, or worse yet, the thankless nature of bureaucracies and the anonymity of life in a cubicle. Sometimes society understands that too.

But what about the guy who has job offers and doesn't want them? Society doesn't grasp that, at least not favorably. That was Dr. G's predicament. After 20 years in higher education, this PhD had no shortage of offers. While he was grateful for the opportunities, none of them held his interest.

His malaise was well founded. Early in his career, he lost tenure for questioning a major university's decision to withhold the identity of an alleged murderer until after the football season— since the star suspect was also the star player. Dr. G. wondered what the school was teaching. (The newspaper wondered if the university was after a higher caliber of student— perhaps those with rounds of 45s or 38s.)

Naturally there were accolades and advancements, but as the decades passed, the high points were obscured by the injustices. Recently, as Dr. G. weighed each opening, the negatives so trumped the positives; he confided he was tired of waking up every day. That dramatic statement showed a stark level of burnout, and a total inability on his part to envision anything, which would bring him pleasure.

We talked about his situation at length, and it was increasingly apparent, it wasn't that Dr. G had no prospects for happiness— it was that he couldn't find them. The challenge for me was to get him to look beyond the known. It was a given his familiar arena would not be the source of his future happiness. In addition to the highly politicized and unfulfilling experience the college campus had become, his field of economics was in a real world mess, offensive to his libertarian sensibilities and academic foundation.

I started one conversation by asking him about the times in his life, when he was truly happy. I wanted to know less about career moves and more about his avocations and interests. Hours into our talk he sheepishly admitted that he loved investigating UFOs. He immediately discounted his interest, saying, *'I'd like to travel to other planets but that's not going to happen.'*

I'm all for telling people that there are no limitations to their desires other than their own lack of faith, but in this case, I agreed. He was staying here— Outer Mongolia maybe, outer space, improbable. Probing deeper (no UFO pun intended), he came alive as he described the theoretical discussions he'd had with other bright folks about every facet of space lore, from government cover-ups to time-bending schemes unknown to us.

As he continued to speak, it became clear that what he enjoyed was steeped more in the process of sharing intellectual pursuits with aware humans, than it was in the possibilities of contact with aliens. I could readily see

numerous uses for his PhD that Dr. G. hadn't considered. Research was a given. He'd be the perfect candidate to work in a think tank where he could develop alternative economic paradigms with like minds. And with his love of education and public speaking, he'd also be a terrific corporate consultant.

Until we talked, Dr. G. couldn't see any of the possibilities. As I write this, he's negotiating an offer from an employer he previously had not considered contacting, and for the first time in a long time, it excites him. He's also on the lecture circuit where audiences fuel his interest with questions about topics he loves to debate. If the current opportunity doesn't pan out, he's nevertheless in a much better state than he was months ago when he couldn't find a reason to get out of bed.

If you're in a position where, for whatever reason, you're at a loss as to what to do, the chances are solid that it's not a lack of opportunities, rather your inability to see them. That sounds awfully Pollyanna-esque when you're a year out of work with mounting bills and no prospects. This will too— but it's no less true: even in the worst times, somebody will prosper. You probably know that. But what you may not accept is that it can be you. Whether your concern is economic or not, if you're in a place where nothing you see is exciting or compelling, then there are two more lists I'll ask you to make.

Similar to the other four, don't compile these with specifics in mind. The fifth list should be fairly easy to make. Write down everything you can remember that ever brought you joy. No matter if it wouldn't bring you happiness now, if it ever did, include it. From being in the boy scouts or winning the science fair, to going to the prom or buying a muscle car, the small things are as important, if not more so, than the big stuff. Daydream, and think of all the things that have made you feel great, if only momentarily. Put them on the *"Joy List."*

Then, look it over. If there is anything on this new list that remains enticing but isn't on your *'like to have'* list, add it. Broadening your lists will make them more useful. The exercise might also show you the limitations of your thoughts. There's a huge amount of information you're not factoring.

The sixth list may be harder to compile, but hopefully it will also be more fun. It's your *"Dream List."* For this compilation, nothing is impossible, even if you "know" it is. Include the things you've never done but might want do— down to the most outlandish scenarios. It doesn't matter if you're capable of doing something, or if you'll ever have the chance to do it. All that counts is whether it's exhilarating when it comes to mind. If it is, write it down, regardless of whether you'd be embarrassed to share it with anyone else. Don't worry about your self-image. Genuine success has nothing to do with what you think will make you look better to others, but that hasn't stopped hoards of us from proceeding as if it might.

Chapter 6
The Science of Wisdom – Part Two
Revelation

Around 1989, while I was hosting an evening talk show on KOA in Denver, the program director du jour wanted me to have a self-help night. Among the memorable authors was a woman who wrote a book about how to marry the rich. I was more interested in how her wealthy husband felt when he read her suggestions. Surprisingly, the Mr. was a sly guy. His take on his wife's tactics was, *'How do you think I got her?'* He was on to her game, and used his wealth to snag what he wanted, regardless of her motives. Whatever. It was my job to make this wench interesting.

Ms. Pseudo-riche glommed on to me as soon as she ascertained I was single. She gleefully assured me I could marry well. She informed me, I'd have to do what the wealthy did. I'd have to go to concerts. I told her that there was an upcoming Chicago Soul Review with half of the original Vee-Jay artists performing, which would be worth the trip. *'I meant Classical concerts,'* she sniffed. I convulsed. She suggested sport venues. I chose bowling. *'No,'* she shuddered, *'ideally, Steeplechase races.'*

Eventually she gave up, and we took calls from folks willing to wear the right clothes, live in the right zip codes, and go to the right venues. I didn't need to consult any list to know that nothing she was peddling was of interest to me. But how many of us are lost in an image, which isn't truly ours, because it's what we think we should do, to get what we might want? How many of us have been influenced by another's urgings, or the advice of several others, who seem to know better than we do, what we need?

Not surprisingly, since almost all of us make it to adulthood with our self-image less than it should be, there

is no shortage of imposing books devoted to the psychology behind our lacking sense of worth. In general, our opinion of ourselves is the impetus for how we try to appear to others. From sociopaths in the extreme, to those with a hint of false pride, it's fairly common for us to portray ourselves as better than we secretly think we are, and that's not always bad. Compensating for self-image issues may be the force behind the bulk of high achievers in every industry. It's no doubt responsible for radio's greatest talents.

Years ago, Robert W. Morgan confided to me that he knew he was having a good day when he felt his self-image was up to his knees. Suddenly I understood why he was driven to awaken at 2:30 in the morning, spending more hours prepping for his show than he was on the air doing it, why his entire focus throughout the day was on what he'd say the next morning. His self-assessment was directly tied to how well he performed. This went way beyond competence and dedication. It was an obsessive need to excel so he could feel better about himself. (His listeners got the better end of the deal.)

Robert was in good company. One of the most common themes in the background of successful disc jockeys is that their self-image is bolstered by what they do, not who they are. The high from a great performance fills their emptiness. Overcoming insecurity has turned performers into stars, and the best radio managers know how to capitalize on it.

The consequences of self-image issues not only impact an individual directly, but they can be downright perplexing to the rest of us when what we see, is anything but what we get. Over 100 years ago, this dichotomy led to a real dilemma for market surveyors. The origin of modern research dates back to the problems posed by the difference between what people said, and what they did. Todd Storz rightly contended that people prefer whatever is familiar,

but it's equally valid that if what people like, is inconsistent with their self-image, they won't tell you the truth.

The product being studied in the early 1900s was soap. Researchers were repeatedly told by consumers that they purchased certain brands— specifically those, which were perceived as exclusive, expensive or used by the upper classes. But store inventory told a different tale. The cheap stuff flew off the shelves. So pollsters developed another tactic. Instead of asking about the behavior of their subjects, they observed it.

In this case, it was little more than glorified dumpster diving. Workers sifted through residential refuse to see what wrappers were thrown out. This tale vindicates every radio rat ever sent out by his boss in the middle of the night to sort through a competitor's trash, looking for secret details of an upcoming contest. Little did any of them know, they were conducting "market research". While few of us would publicly admit to digging through garbage, many of us would gladly claim to be a market researcher, and the reason is self-evident: the latter doesn't offend our self-image.

From that psychological basic alone, it's amazing to note that until recently, radio ratings were wholly dependent on self-reporting.

By the 1960s, radio was primarily served by two rating companies, CE Hooper, which did a telephone study, and Pulse, which canvassed neighborhoods. Both had limitations. Hooper boasted its ability to be a coincidental, meaning they called homes and asked if you were listening to the radio right then, and if so, to what station. Unsurprisingly, Top 40 outlets sometimes had 80% of the audience at night. Teens controlled the family phone in the evening. Since these reports predated demographics, if you could talk, you were included.

Pulse showed up at your door with a clipboard listing every station in town, and asked if you'd heard any of them

in the past week. It was an aided recall, and it didn't always intersect with reality. In 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, a few AM facilities with signals that reached Havana, enjoyed their highest ratings, in a handful of U.S. Cities. It was highly questionable since they were broadcasting entirely in Spanish throughout the standoff. More routinely, daytime-only stations could be counted upon to score reports of nighttime listening.

Radio broadcasters were so intent on creating a reliable real-time survey based on a representative sampling of the local population that, in 1966, in a complete lapse of consciousness and a total fit of insanity, they approved the "diary method." The "American Research Bureau" (ARB) was the culprit in charge. The approach was relatively new to the medium, but the company had been using it to rate television since its formation in 1949.

In the early '70s, ARB became the dominant radio ratings service by recognizing that if they convinced advertisers to rely on their approach, broadcasters would have no choice but to fund it. Time buyers were impressed with the claims they'd know the age and gender of the audience, as well as exactly when they were listening. Nothing was exact about this method. It was a great sell, based on an impossible premise.

The dirty secret, perhaps not even understood by ARB insiders, was by psychological definition, radio diary data is unreliable. Its collection violates human nature on two fronts. When you ask someone to write down their behavior and sign their name to it, they will not report anything inconsistent with their self-image, or the image they wish to portray. Early television was uncomplicated, but radio had many more choices, and definite social nuances. If early researchers couldn't count on responses about soap purchases, how plausible was it, over 50 years later, that human nature would have changed to the point people would reveal something as personal as their radio

listening habits, if they didn't think their responses would cast them in the most positive light? What self-respecting teenage boy would ever report hearing *'Love Songs after Dark'* or soft mellow anything?

Further, television is home based. Radio is mobile. Few people are inclined to carry a pamphlet with them and fill it out on the spot. Diaries were usually completed at the end of the day, or more bothersome, at the end of the week. Since the entries reflected what participants wanted others to know, it's no shock Hispanic stations had all day listeners. It was not uncommon for ethnic respondents, in particular, to support their culture by claiming to listen to nothing else, and to listen to it for 20 continuous hours.

It's been said that Hispanics were the reason for ARB's name change. The constant problem of getting anyone, especially minorities, to agree to do the survey at all, gives credence to that assertion. Around 1970, the company became "Arbitron." A rumored explanation was that it was due to Hispanic respondents' fear of interacting with the "American Research Bureau," thinking it was the government. ("Arbitron" was chosen, in part, because it was already a company trademark, the name for the instantaneous electronic measuring system for television viewing, which was unveiled at the close of 1957.)

Due to the self-image factor, what the diary method measured best was perception. It was also reasonably good at recognizing the top winners and bottom losers. But for the stations in the middle, it was anyone's guess how accurate those 'make it or break it' results really were.

Any doubts that respondents were not filling out the diaries while listening, should have been laid to rest with the infamous "diary review," whereby subscribing stations could send a representative to Arbitron's facilities to view the returned pamphlets. Apart from numerous telltale signs that participants entered the data after the fact was the comments section. Ignored by tabulators, these notes

provided vital listener feedback to programmers. They would have provided vital feedback to the tabulators too, if they bothered to read them.

My favorite stories about that came from Bob Moody in the 1980s. Bob, a veteran programmer, was then running WPOC, Baltimore's hottest country station. Moody went to review the diaries and saw a couple discrepancies.

Information missed by the tabulators included one notation by a participant who claimed to have listened to a news/talk station for 12 hours every day. In the comment section, he wrote, *'Teaching my parrot to talk, leaving the radio on for the bird.'* Bob laughed at the idea of the "parrot demo." But the next diary went further in demographic creativity— it brought back the dead. After reviewing a full week of listening entered by a respondent, Moody flipped to the comment section where he discovered this revelation: *'I am filling this out for my grandmother who died before the survey. I put down what she probably would have wanted to hear.'*

Today, diaries are being replaced with Arbitron's "People Meter," a receiver worn by the participant, which passively gathers data— the original hope of broadcasters over 40 years ago. But hardly have all the accuracy problems been put to rest. Current debate surrounds whether a reasonable representative sample of the population is used, and if the devices always capture what's heard. (Early snafus include an entire zip code in San Francisco where no one ever listened to any radio station.) But the new methodology is a quantum leap in potential accuracy, fully transcending the destabilizing self-image issues inherent in self-reporting.

With your lists, don't include what anyone— dead or otherwise, wants to hear. If no one else would ever know the outcome, what is it that you'd secretly like to try? Too often, we conform to the norm. We'll take the easy way out rather than risk following our heart.

Historical and psychological studies confirm that it is less difficult to go through life with a strong set of rules, than it is to live in total freedom. The concept makes most of us recoil, but for some of us, it's true. In its extreme, people who have absolutely no options will report that there is a different kind of freedom in knowing the parameters of their existence. No thought is necessary about what to do or where to do it, when there's no way to do it at all. In such tight constraints, attention can be turned to internal pursuits. Hopefully you'll never be in a position to prove it.

But to a small degree, all of us see the dynamic at play in our lives. Where we work may dictate where we'll live. How much we can afford can determine what we buy. What others believe might sway our actions. In almost all circumstances, though the reasons behind them will vary, our decisions will be made within familiar parameters. Try to think beyond them for your *"Dream List."* Create scenarios separate from anything you already have. Imagine that you won the Life-Lotto. Make a list for your wish-granting genie. It will come in handy if something important leaves your life. And if that something is major, and its exit is unexpected, this list will help ground you from the shock of change.

Shock would be soft-peddling the emotion Venus Andrecht felt when she found herself divorced with a young daughter. Down to nothing would have been an upgrade. Venus was starting over with less than that, after an astoundingly bad court action left her ex-husband unthinkably victorious. The judge ordered Venus to comply with a non-compete agreement, prohibiting her from making money in the only way she knew how— in the field she and her ex pursued during their marriage. Her earlier attempts at 9 to 5 jobs failed miserably, albeit sometimes humorously. Now she had to reinvent herself.

With nothing else to do, Venus sat on her porch near the San Diego beaches and let her imagination run wild.

She thought of everything she ever loved, and imagined doing something similar. After making and using her *"Dream List,"* Venus decided to train for a career as a massage therapist. It fit both her self-image and what she enjoyed doing. It allowed her to call her own shots and provided a sense of accomplishment. But it didn't pay all the bills.

When some clients suggested she give them psychic readings, Venus blanched. They were convincing in their argument, she was tremendously intuitive with her body work, seeming to know just what ailed them, but that didn't begin to address her aversion to being a full blown kook. Venus comes from a family of them— her mother was known for an assemblage of odd otherworld techniques, which always seemed to work.

Whether her reservation sprung from her distrust in her own abilities, or how others might view her, Venus resisted. Working with her dream list eventually enabled her to place her hopes above her concerns. She gave psychic readings a try. The results were astonishing. They led to a number of personal revelations and a technique unique to her. Being a kook was rewarding and fun. She embraced it wholeheartedly. Today Venus is well known in the spiritual community. She's the author of several books, CDs, and videos— and a top choice for private readings. Her destiny was right under her nose, but she never would have begun to sniff it out, if she hadn't made the list.

As hard as it is when your parameters evaporate and nothing is on the horizon to replace them, it's more difficult when your life hasn't totally fallen apart but you're plainly not happy. In those situations, if you make a change, you've got something to lose. Most of us won't take a plunge until we've got nothing on the line, or we're fully convinced that where we're going is worth giving up where we are. But if you've created lists that reflect who you are, not merely what you've done— lists that reflect your

essence, not what's comfortably familiar, then you've got what you need to make the right choice.

Even if your lists are ideal, there is no guarantee you won't come away with regret after reaching a decision. However, the odds are in your favor you'll be better off with the choices you make, than making no choice at all. I saw it first-hand, going to school in Miami Beach. Back then South Beach was a dumping ground for old folks, whose children up north felt would be better off in Florida. Hell, they presumably felt their parents would be better off anywhere but near them as evidenced by the scarcity of their visits.

The hotels that adorn those beaches today bear little resemblance to the dilapidated conditions offered to the abandoned elderly 50 years ago. The buildings, then, were remnants of a formerly glorious era, like their inhabitants. These seniors had lived through a wealth of experiences, but as I'd walk by their oceanfront perches, what struck me, in addition to the pervasive loneliness they oozed, was how often I saw the unmistakable look of regret in their eyes. I was too young to drive and they were too old. None of us had any place to go, so occasionally we'd talk.

While regret was a concept nebulous to my youth, it was easy to notice the commonality in their stories beyond the predictable, *"How could they do this to me?"* referring to their absent children. In almost all scenarios, these souls were not saddened by what they did in the past. They were grieving for what they hadn't done— the chances they didn't take. They were slowly dying from a bad case of "whatifs." What if they had followed their dreams?

"No choice," though, is very different from "no change." For drifters, accustomed to continual moves, it would be a huge departure if they chose to remain in place to tackle a problem, as opposed to running again. For most of us, we are more inclined to stay too long, than to leave prematurely, but deciding not to make a change can be a

very positive choice, if you've taken the effort to consider a proposed move, and have concluded it's not right for you. In fact, there are many scenarios where the greatest help your lists will provide is to point out how good you currently have it.

When we're mired in disappointment, the negatives are inescapable. Yet there can be times that we're so focused on what's wrong, we fail to see what's right. Particularly when we're fatigued to the point of burnout, it's easy to see plentiful reasons to go, and none to stay. Throngs of us have exited in the heat of the moment. But even when calmness prevails, plenty of wrong thought has gone into walking away from the right thing.

That's where Charlie Murdock found himself when he unexpectedly wound up with a radio station he previously sold. Murdock was always the man with the plan. He was not necessarily the brightest in the room, but it was a given, he was the most driven. He had distinct goals, and the discipline to reach them.

Early in his career, Charlie was a disc jockey and programmer with an eye on management, but he recognized that virtually all radio station general managers came from the ranks of sales. Rather that quit his air-shift to become an account executive, Charlie parlayed his position. Since his station reported the local high school sports scores at night, he figured he could capitalize on the coaches' gratitude. Assessing the opportunities, it occurred to him that every school handed out player awards, and it was probable that no one on the faculty was beholden to the guy selling the trophies. Murdock became that guy.

We'll avoid a discussion of ethics, since it's doubtful any such notion occurred to Charlie. He formed a company, made semi-cold calls, created a budget, tracked inventory, and by 1964, he felt he had enough management experience to run anything. Along the way he learned something vital about himself. He loved selling, more than

being on the air. His greatest high came from closing the deal. He was ready for radio management.

Charlie did so well in his new role as general manager of WSAI in Cincinnati, that within a couple of years, he moved across town to head the legendary WLW. In 1976, he reached his ultimate goal when he put together an investor group and bought the station. Unlike many people who have attained what they were after, Charlie did not tire of his role. He remained energized and was utterly surprised when, three years later, a flamboyant local businessman made good on his nickname, "Cadillac Joe," by offering to buy WLW for much more than it could possibly have been worth. It was the offer no one could refuse, and Joe Scallon further sweetened the deal with the promise Murdock would remain in charge. It sounded too good to be true. Ultimately, it was.

Joe micromanaged Charlie to the point that, after about two years, Murdock resigned to start his own business— developing programming for the emerging cable television industry. It was tough for him, but much tougher for Scallon, who finally went bust. In 1983, Charlie was able to buy the station for millions less than he had sold it. This story should have had a happy ending with Charlie assuming his old role, basking in his comfort-zone, enjoying his money, and effortlessly taking WLW to new heights. But that's not what happened.

Charlie's experience working as a manager under Joe, overwhelmed him. His reaction to going back to what was known fulfillment, appeared to be a knee-jerk "No!" In reality, he deliberated quite awhile before walking the other way. Murdock was the same pragmatic guy, but time had so amplified what was bad about working with Joe that it completely obscured how good it could be to be back in the job without him. By any rational standard, Charlie was right to leave initially. But by his own standards, he was wrong not to seize the opportunity to return to what he

loved. Had he been able to emotionally detach, his decision would have been different. That's why you're making the lists. They'll focus you when you need it most.

There will be no pity parties for Charlie Murdock. Although cable penetration was low when he pursued the industry, with his insane sales ability, he managed to sign up clients ranging from JC Penney to Dole Pineapple. By the time WLW came back into his life, he had placed his third program on a national network. Charlie continued his financial participation in the station, cashing out when the management team he installed decided to buy additional properties. Prior to the housing market collapse, Murdock, at over 75 years old, was netting several hundred thousand dollars a year, producing weekend television shows for homebuilders in various markets. But even so, when thoughts turned to the past and the satisfying career to which he didn't return, on many occasions he has said, *"if only."*

Your lists will tell you who you are, and will help you determine what you want, but there's another point necessary to any good decision, one that's vital to your happiness: Understanding there is always a cost.

Chapter 7
The Mall of Life – Part 1
Paying Retail

Think of earth as one big shopping mall. This analogy may be more appealing to the gals than the guys, but even if you're shopping adverse, stay with me because you're living in the *Mall of Life*. Everything is in stock and you can buy anything you want, if you're willing to pay the price. Shoplifting is impossible, nothing is ever on sale, and the currency you'll use for your purchases is rarely financial. You'll need to know a lot about who you are, to determine what you're willing to pay. As that probably sounds somewhat abstract, here's a tangible example:

You're in college. You've got a big test tomorrow. You want to go out on a hot date tonight. The price of the date is the likelihood you'll do poorly on the exam. Is it worth it? If you're a certified nerd with a 4.0 average, and this is the first girl ever to take an interest in you, and she happens to be the prettiest girl in the class; tubing the test is not much of a price to pay. On the other hand, if you're a hearty-partying jock with a 1.9 average, screwing up the exam is certainly not worth the cost of a good time.

Almost never will decisions be so clear-cut. Whether to move across the country, take a job in another field, get married, have children, or adopt a pet, all pose challenges. Indisputably, some more than others— you can't leave your spouse or kids at the pound, at least not in many municipalities. But from the toughest decisions to those made on a whim, the thought process behind your choice boils down to some version of, 'Do I want to pay the price?' or to put it directly: 'Is this the right thing for me to do?' Your lists will go far to answer that question. On the surface, they'll help you to determine what you want, but less apparent though perhaps more important, they'll reveal

what you're willing to pay.

There's an old adage: price is what you pay, value is what you get. It's pretty obvious when it refers to products, but it's just as true in the *Mall of Life*. The price of becoming a Fortune 500 CEO is, usually, devoting yourself almost exclusively to your career. The currency for that choice will be the loss of personal time, which may result in the end of a relationship or marriage, the inability to be there for family milestones or crises, a lack of relaxation opportunities, or whatever might be personally rewarding but would cut into your career focus.

Whether that's too much to pay will be determined in two ways. One is on the price itself: how important is it to you to be immersed in family life? If you want to coach little league, take the kids fishing, and have time to hands-on help them reach maturity, then missing that may be too costly. But if you're content to let your spouse handle the daily routine, are fine with spending little time with the kids, or perhaps not having a family or marriage at all, then the price is not a big factor.

The other determinant is value: how important to you it is to be CEO? If you can't imagine yourself doing anything else, you awaken with vigor wanting to lead a large company, your satisfaction in life comes from your job; then there's a lot of value for you in the CEO purchase. But if being in charge is more of a whim, something you think will provide prestige or allow you to avoid working under a supervisor, for instance, then the value is low.

Looking at price and value, if you're driven to be CEO (good value) and you're willing to minimize personal time (fair price), your decision is made. But what if you're driven to be CEO, and you also want the family experience? That's precisely what happened to many of the gals caught up in the early days of "Women's Lib."

Sold a bill of goods that they could "have it all" (however loosely defined), most of these ladies were sorely

disappointed with the results. They found it hard to accept that it was impossible to be on the fast track to CEO, and a hands-on mom, simultaneously. Their emotions, which ran the gamut from self-loathing to blaming society, overshadowed their foiled *Mall of Life* shoplifting attempt. You can't simultaneously achieve mutually exclusive dreams.

We tend to think that conflicts are disagreements with others. But those skirmishes pale in comparison to the internal clashes, which result from competing desires. Using the CEO illustration, if the price of being the head honcho is minimal family time, and the price of being immersed in motherhood is copious family time, there's no need to spell out the result of trying to buy them both.

To a less dramatic degree, most of us do want it all. Before you weigh your lists against any situation you encounter, look for conflicts on them. If something competes directly with anything else, you've got a problem— a big one, if it's a clash between your *'Must Have'* or *'Cannot Have'* lists. It's surprising how often it occurs, and how seldom we realize it. The lack of recognition can lead to an unwise purchase, victimhood— and it's very expensive.

The value in being a victim is found in the ability to blame outside forces— people, circumstances, the weather, you name it. We no longer have to take personal responsibility for our own actions. That's fine, until we arrive at the cost. The price of being a victim is failure. We'll have to resign ourselves to remaining impoverished— in money, love, or whatever we consider valuable, because by definition, you can't be a victim if you succeed. Is that a good value? No doubt, the price of individual responsibility can seem tedious or downright exhausting— but the way I see it, the value of reaching your dreams makes the price affordable. Merely buying the ability to go for those dreams seems to be a good deal to me. But I can't answer that for

you. If you're willing to pay for victimhood, it's available at the *Mall of Life*.

Few of us knowingly set up conflicting conditions in our lives, though that doesn't make them any less prevalent. Among broadcasters, frequently the issue is location. Anyone in radio can probably recall former co-workers who refused to move to major markets but passionately wanted to be nationally known. In theory, it can happen. In reality, it doesn't. It might be less problematic for such folks if they are happy with what they have while idly dreaming of what they want— but commonly, their bitterness eclipses any recognition that they're holding an explosive shopping list. They found exactly what they wanted in the *Mall of Life* and are determined not to pay for it.

There's an esoteric school of thought, which says you can have anything you want, as long as you're willing to do whatever it takes to get it. It's the basis for several books including a couple by Mike Hernacki. Most interesting is the belief that the universe will not necessarily demand you pay any price, because what's crucial is your willingness to pay it, not the payment itself.

A story in Hernacki's "*The Ultimate Secret To Getting Absolutely Everything You Want,"* punctuates that point. It's about a conversation Mike overheard between two lawyers at a courthouse in the Midwest. When one of them gleefully mentioned he was closing his office to move to Florida, the other wistfully admitted he'd also love to move away. The one who was closing up shop asked his colleague why he couldn't do likewise.

After hearing a litany of no job prospects, no family ties, no money and so forth, the guy on the go shrugged and replied, *'Well, that's the same with me.'* Astonished, the other attorney proclaimed him foolish and worse, at pretty loud decibels. What the exchange highlighted was the exiting guy's willingness to make the deal, and his

colleague's disbelief that anyone would pay the price.

The left-behind lawyer continued to want to live in sunny climate (value), but refused to forego the stability of a known client base (price). His unnecessary frustration arose from his inability to see he had a choice, let alone how to make it. Had he made and used his own set of lists and didn't choose to leave, he could have found peace with a reframed decision to stay: he wanted a stable client base (value) and it was worth it to him to live in intemperate weather to get it (price).

Conflicting desires are not limited to personal conundrums. Some of the most flagrant cases come from the minds of marketers. Los Angeles area radio station KRLA provided the perfect illustration in the early '80s.

KRLA was no stranger to conflicts. In 1962, the FCC announced that the station's license would be forfeited. The owners lost their final appeal a couple years later. It was quite the saga and many onlookers blamed the appearance of a fraudulent contest. Radio contests in the 1950s were criticized for a lot of things, often quite accurately. Promotions surrounding hidden items were notorious throughout the industry for being the direct cause of major property damage, both public and private. From an entire library, decimated after money was hidden in a book, to countless neighborhoods, ravaged when lawns were dug up in pursuit of a prize, by 1956, the FCC had reached the end of its patience.

When Top 40 impresario Todd Storz applied to purchase WQAM, the commission included a stipulation: "The King of Contesting" (as *Time Magazine* dubbed him), would have to cease and desist. Gone were the days of massive traffic snarls created by disc jockeys throwing money from the rooftops of downtown office buildings… but not for long.

While WQAM's license was granted under the no-contest caveat, in short order, Storz was able to return to

his winning ways. It was too hard to single him out since flamboyant promotion that hyped ratings, were the norm throughout the industry. So long as everyone refrained from becoming a total public nuisance, the FCC grudgingly went back to acting as if it was pretty much OK.

In 1959, when KRLA's new owners decided to inaugurate their switch to Top 40 with the "Golden Key" contest, no eyebrows were raised. The premise was predicable: clues to the key's secret location would be broadcast, and the listener who found it would win cash. The execution was more interesting. Showcasing their new signal, the public was told the key would power up the new 50,000-watt transmitter, and the winner would be doing the honors, at a big party, for a lot of prize money. The problem lay in what the public wasn't told: there was no key. Well, there was, but KRLA had not yet decided where to put it. Clues went on for days before they buried their treasure.

KRLA knew someone would find the key. They didn't know the FCC would find out when they hid it, though by then, it was low on their worry index. Outsiders blame the promotion. Insiders cite numerous smaller insults (say, the license-required farm report being a list of produce available at local grocery stores), but what doomed KRLA had nothing to do with any of that.

In investigating the contest, the Commission discovered the truth about who owned the station. While the licensee was an American, his fabulously wealthy brother, Jack Kent Cooke, was decidedly Canadian, and Jack was a lot more involved than simply acting as a financier. Since one of the few FCC requirements for ownership was that licensees had to be US citizens, their license-denying decision was a no-brainer. It would be almost two decades before the station had an official owner.

It happened around 1981, and involved about a dozen entities. The FCC's initial decision to give KRLA's

license to Bob Hope was met with loud complaints from the other contenders. As the application process is costly and lengthy, the Commission compromised. They assigned the station to everyone who had properly applied, with the caveat that after the initial three-year license term, Bob Hope would be able to buy his partners out, at the fair market rate. The one-liner *"a horse designed by a committee is a camel"* comes to mind, but the truth was less colorful. Hope's group controlled the decisions.

What Hope got was an AM facility with somewhat limited coverage and a rabid audience of Chicanos. Art Laboe, who oversaw the station before Hope's group, had it exquisitely positioned to attract East LA Hispanics. Not only was the signal strong in their locale, but Laboe super-served their tastes, knowing well what music they adored. The good news was the station was sold out. The bad news was the spot rate was pennies, compared to the dollars of mass-market stations.

Hope's people determined they could charge exponentially more for commercials if they attracted affluent Anglos who were primarily on the west side of Los Angeles. Beyond being a directional AM facility, technically unable to cover the desired geography, its tweaked oldies format directly faced a high-powered FM competitor with a long history of meeting the needs of KRLA's new target audience. That would have been bad enough, but what came next was inexplicable.

Forget about signal, forget about competitors—assume KRLA's music was 100% on target (it wasn't). The big promotion was evidence that the new management was utterly clueless: *'Pick up your Heart & Soul of Rock & Roll bumper sticker at Kentucky Fried Chicken and you might win $100.'* The produced announcement for this generous offer was punctuated with a female shrieking in delight. Now for the reality: the idea of a yuppie defacing a BMW with a bumper sticker was as far-fetched as finding a fast food

outlet in their zip code. The prize of $100 wouldn't come close to covering dinner, parking and a movie, in the tony suburb of Westwood, where their coveted audience could be found. KRLA didn't need competitors. They were defeating themselves.

Lest you think that's the extent of their ability to make chaos out of order, here's more about the aforementioned bumper stickers: Under Laboe, the station had the longest running bumper sticker campaign in the market's history. No radio visual had ever adorned as many cars per capita. And yes, it could also be said, based on Laboe's audience's aggregate wealth or lack of it, that no sticker had ever been on as many abandoned junkers by the side of the road, but the bottom line is after many years of handing them out, the distinctive blue and yellow stickers were everywhere. Changing them was out of the question, so, naturally, that's what Hope's people did. The new sticker, which bore no resemblance to the tens of thousands still on the streets, quickly destroyed a decade worth of branding.

The three-year license period was painfully long, made no better after Hope's total acquisition. A subsequent sale to another broadcaster didn't return any glory to the facility. 1110-AM has gone through numerous revisions since Hope's era, and I suspect by the time you're reading this, the current kiddie approach, KDIS Radio Disney, will also have vacated 1110-AM. As for the call letters, KRLA is now on 870-AM, the former KIEV in Glendale, a Los Angeles suburb.

KRLA's new management was correct in their assessment of the value of an upscale audience. But it was irrelevant whether they wanted to pay the price to obtain it. They were completely out of their league. Nothing they did on, or to, KRLA could get those goods. Sometimes you have to understand your limitations. It doesn't mean you can't have what you want, just that you've got to go about getting

it, differently. The real goal for Hope's group was profit— and they threw away what they had, to go for what they'd never receive.

The *Mall of Life* can sell you anything, but don't lose sight of what you want to buy and what you're willing pay. Your lists will help keep you on track, but it's not always a straightforward transaction. There will be times when the price turns out to be higher than you imagined, too late for you to make a return.

And there will be times when you have no inkling what you're actually purchasing. One of the best examples is money. It's a given you know someone who wants money. You're probably thinking we all want money, but seldom is that true. What we want is what money can buy— and that can be most anything. So if money is on one of your lists, think about what you'd do with it because that's what you're really after.

It could be a certain lifestyle, perhaps bragging rights of being the infamous Joneses, whom others want to equal. More likely, it's some form of calling your own shots. (If you make the mistake of presuming financial assets will provide a guarantee of security, reread the first chapter— a few times.) Whatever money represents to you, unless you merely enjoy staring at wallet size, green pictures of dead politicians; money, alone, is not what you want. It's difficult to break free from associating the need for money with what you really desire but if you'll take the time to examine what matters, you'll be closer to making it yours.

If you want to travel the world, consider a job on a cruise ship or working for the company that owns them. Even if you never sail the seas in your position, your work might come with liberal travel benefits. If you want a lot of vacation time, investigate teaching. An annual salary for nine months work is standard.

If you're completely focused on security, looking for a job with amazing retirement benefits may give you what you

need. But be careful— in addition to an economy where every pension is up for grabs, the price you'll pay can mire you for years in a position you'd rather not fill. On the other hand, you might be able to make a terrific *Mall of Life* purchase with a job you do want that gives you solid prospects for the security you need. How good a shopper are you?

There's a common thread throughout the history of enlightenment from the ancient mystery schools to contemporary motivational writers: success comes by intently concentrating on what you desire, as if it is already yours, without a nod as to how you got it.

Ignoring the power of the unseen forces for now, and remaining on the overtly dense earth plane, regardless of how you get what you want, if you've taken the effort to know precisely what it is, you're more apt to want what you get— and that's a perennial key to happiness. As for money itself, you can buy it in the *Mall of Life.* The price will be steep, and if you're in sync with the majority of us, you won't be happy with your purchase.

It could be worse, however. The woman in the last chapter who wrote the book on how to marry rich, made the price seem small. While I recoiled at becoming a patron of the arts she had in mind, there were no shortage of ladies lined up to grab any wealthy guy. I don't know how it turned out for those who made that purchase, though living a life that wasn't of their choosing, to get what wasn't really theirs— money belonging to someone else— doesn't appear to be a firm foundation for fulfillment to me. But, it's completely up to you.

In the *Mall of Life,* you can have what you want, but you've got to pay the going rate to get it. After you understand that concept, you'll begin to live life on your terms. That's huge! Rather than crying over what isn't yours, you'll be able to determine what anything costs, and whether it's worth buying. Talk about empowerment.

Rationally, it is that simple. Emotionally, it's not that easy. And if you're alert, you already know that human nature is not a natural ally— probably not individually, and definitely not collectively.

Sociologists have long studied the "group mind." They conclude that people in large gatherings are less intelligent and more emotional than individuals would be. The greatest (but tremendously overused) example is what happened in Nazi Germany when people gladly made one of the all time bad purchases in the *Mall of Life.* Human nature explains why they did it, but to understand what they were thinking, a little history will help.

After the First World War, the German Revolution of 1918 led to the creation of a parliamentary republic known for its democracy and freedom. Prior to the fighting, the country had been under imperial rule, which made it very unequal economically and socially. The common man had no hope for success. But after the formation of the Weimar Republic (governed by an egalitarian constitution written in the city of Weimar in 1919), there were seemingly unlimited opportunities for all, through capitalism.

The hope felt by the German population for their lives under the new government was a stark comparison to the war-weary four years before it. But it was short-lived. Economically, the Republic was saddled with post-war debts and restrictions, making it impossible to recover. The Treaty of Versailles, which was supposed to alleviate those conditions, failed. Many Germans had no jobs, their currency was devalued, hyperinflation resulted, and even working families were barely surviving.

In retrospect, it's difficult to conceive that anything other than what happened could have happened. Germans went shopping in the *Mall of Life* and readily gave up their liberty for security. They hungered for the control of Adolph Hitler in the hopes that he would make them whole. There's a lot more to say about it, but the most revealing

account I've found comes from a woman who lived through Hitler's rise in Austria, Kitty Werthmann. I've included her memoir at the end of this chapter.

Hitler capitalized on the effects of the group-mind with numerous rallies where he'd whip a sea of attendees into a frenzy, by sympathizing with their problems and guaranteeing he had the solution. There was a much better tomorrow, and he was the one to bring it forth. The concept was so enticing that the masses were swept up by it. There's a word for it in the German language: zeitgeist. It means the spirit of the times. Hitler's promise was so appealing that the details of how he'd achieve it were not necessary. All that mattered was he'd bring about change and provide help. The price the public thought they were paying was a readily agreeable deal: their self-determination for prosperity. As you know, it didn't work out that way.

It was a Faustian bargain, and it didn't turn out any better for the Germans than it did for Faust. Faust was the fellow who was willing to trade his soul to the devil for unlimited knowledge. He's a 16th Century German legend, featured in various literary works including those by Marlowe and Goethe. Whether he existed or not, the ultimate conclusion is there are some deals you don't want to make. Regarding trading your freedom for protection, it's a deal you can't make. World history confirms there has never been a time when a population was nurtured because it collectively abdicated its rights.

Historical archives also contain extensive proof that human beings have repeatedly tried to strike that deal. Current headlines show we're doing it now. From the worried moms who, in response to terrorism, are happy to abandon their constitutional rights for protection, to the financially stressed dads who offer to give up their freedom of choice for benefits— we witness people who are totally willing to make the worst move possible. Their plight is hardly new. It was a great concern for the forefathers of the

United States.

Our founders wanted to provide us with the tools we needed to maintain our freedom. One of their big concerns was that we not fall victim to a powerful central government, which they believed would necessarily lead to tyranny and control. They also recognized our Republic would stand only as long as did the People's resolve to remain free. Benjamin Franklin revealed how well he understood human nature when he cautioned, *"Those who would give up Essential Liberty to purchase a little Temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety."*

Philosophers through the ages have explained how we'd make such awful deals. The Hegelian Dialectic sums it up best. (Though it was named for G.W.F. Hegel who pontificated in early 19th Century Germany, the current specifics are closer to the philosophy of Karl Marx, a student of Hegel and many others.) The dialect involves three parts, usually known as *"thesis, antithesis, synthesis."*

Here's how it works— *Thesis:* the government creates a problem. *Antithesis:* the people are greatly affected by it. *Synthesis:* the government offers a freedom-limiting solution, which is quickly embraced by the desperate people. The 2010 Healthcare bill represents a good real world example (pardon the gross simplification here): *Thesis:* government mandates and limitations exponentially drive up medical costs. *Antithesis:* Americans can no longer afford to pay for health care. *Synthesis:* government offers affordable coverage through higher taxes and rationed benefits, to which strapped citizens readily agree.

Obviously, the success of the Hegelian Dialectic is dependent on the people not being aware of the man behind the curtain. Over the years we've bought a lot of apathy in the *Mall of Life*. Perhaps better than anyone else, Alexis De Tocqueville understood the frailties of a free society when it intersected with human nature.

De Tocqueville came to America from France in the

1800s to study our government. He was resplendent with pithy and prescient quotes. Some researchers believe that among them is the premise that as soon as Americans realized they could vote on their own entitlements, our system of government was lost. De Tocqueville is often quoted as saying, *"The American Republic will endure until the day Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public's money,"* but there's no specific sourcing. Whether he did say it or not, too many of our representatives take it as a directive.

De Tocqueville's supposed sentiments have also been attributed without verification, to Alexander Fraser Tytler, a 16th/17th Century Scottish lawyer. The words often put into Tytler's mouth go further to explain the results of our poor purchase: "*Every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy which is always followed by a dictatorship. The average age of the world's greatest civilizations from the beginning of history has been about 200 years. During those 200 years, these nations always progress through the following sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to great courage; from courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to complacency; from complacency to apathy; from apathy to dependence; from dependence back to bondage.*" Tytler probably didn't say it, and perhaps never thought it, but it's no less true.

Though when ranking profoundly stupid choices, it's still not as bad as it gets. If you think the current credit crisis is a big concern, wait until you hear about the fatal financing available in *Mall of Life.*

Don't Let Freedom Slip Away
Kitty Werthmann

What I am about to tell you is something you've probably never heard or will ever read in history books. I believe that I am an eyewitness to history. I cannot tell you that Hitler took Austria by tanks and guns; it would distort history. We elected him by a landslide 98% of the vote. I've never read that in any American publications. Everyone thinks that Hitler just rolled in with his tanks and took Austria by force.

In 1938, Austria was in deep Depression. Nearly one-third of our workforce was unemployed. We had 25% inflation and 25% bank loan interest rates. Farmers and business people were declaring bankruptcy daily. Young people were going from house to house begging for food. Not that they didn't want to work; there simply weren't any jobs. My mother was a Christian woman and believed in helping people in need. Every day we cooked a big kettle of soup and baked bread to feed those poor, hungry people, about 30 daily.

The Communist Party and the National Socialist Party were fighting each other. Blocks and blocks of cities like Vienna, Linz, and Graz were destroyed. The people became desperate and petitioned the government to let them decide what kind of government they wanted.

We looked to our neighbor on the north, Germany, where Hitler had been in power since 1933. We had been told that they didn't have unemployment or crime, and they had a high standard of living. Nothing was ever said about persecution of any group -- Jewish or otherwise. We were led to believe that everyone was happy. We wanted the same way of life in Austria. We were promised that a vote for Hitler would mean the end of unemployment and help for the family. Hitler also said that businesses would be assisted, and farmers would get their farms back. Ninety-eight percent of the population voted to annex Austria to Germany and have Hitler for our ruler.

We were overjoyed, and for three days we danced in the streets and had candlelight parades. The new government opened up big field kitchens and everyone was fed. After the election, German officials were appointed, and like a miracle, we suddenly had law and order. Three or four weeks later, everyone was employed. The government made sure that a lot of work was created through the Public Work Service. Hitler decided we should have equal rights for women. Before this, it was a custom that married Austrian women did not work outside the home. An able-bodied husband would be looked down on if he couldn't support his family. Many women in the teaching profession were elated that they could retain the jobs they previously had been required to give up for marriage.

Hitler Targets Education Eliminates Religious Instruction for Children

Our education was nationalized. I attended a very good public school. The population was predominantly Catholic, so we had religion in our schools. The day we elected Hitler (March 13, 1938), I walked into my schoolroom to find the crucifix replaced by Hitler's picture hanging next to a Nazi flag. Our teacher, a very devout woman, stood up and told the class we wouldn't pray or have religion anymore. Instead, we sang Deutschland, Deutschland, Uber Alles, and had physical education.

Sunday became National Youth Day with compulsory attendance. Parents were not pleased about the sudden change in curriculum. They were told that if they did not send us, they would receive a stiff letter of warning the first time. The second time they would be fined the equivalent of $300, and the third time they would be subject to jail. The first two hours consisted of political indoctrination. The rest of the day we had sports. As time went along, we loved it. Oh, we had so much fun and got our sports equipment free. We would go home and gleefully tell our parents about the wonderful time we had.

My mother was very unhappy. When the next term started, she took me out of public school and put me in a convent. I told her she couldn't do that and she told me that someday when I grew up, I would be grateful. There was a very good curriculum, but hardly any fun, no sports, and no political indoctrination. I hated it at first but felt I could tolerate it. Every once in a while, on holidays, I went home. I would go back to my old friends and ask what was going on and what they were doing. Their loose lifestyle was very alarming to me. They lived without religion. By that time unwed mothers were glorified for having a baby for Hitler. It seemed strange to me that our society changed so suddenly. As time went along, I realized what a great deed my mother did so that I wasn't exposed to that kind of humanistic philosophy.

Equal Rights Hits Home

In 1939, the war started and a food bank was established. All food was rationed and could only be purchased using food stamps. At the same time, a full-employment law was passed which meant if you didn't work, you didn't get a ration card, and if you didn't have a card, you starved to death. Women who stayed home to raise their families didn't have any marketable skills and often had to take jobs more suited for men.

Soon after this, the draft was implemented. It was compulsory for young people, male and female, to give one year to the labor corps. During the day, the girls worked on the farms, and at night they returned to their barracks for military training just like the boys. They were trained to be anti-aircraft gunners and participated in the signal corps. After the labor corps, they were not discharged but were used in the front lines. When I go back to Austria to visit my family and friends, most of these women are emotional cripples because they just were not equipped to handle the horrors of combat. Three months before I turned 18, I was severely injured in an air raid attack. I nearly had a leg amputated, so I was spared having to go into the labor corps and into military service.

Hitler Restructured the Family Through Daycare

When the mothers had to go out into the work force, the government immediately established childcare centers. You could take your children ages 4 weeks to school age and leave them there around-the-clock, 7 days a week, under the total care of the government. The state raised a whole generation of children. There were no motherly women to take care of the children, just people highly trained in child psychology. By this time, no one talked about equal rights. We knew we had been had.

Health Care & Small Business Suffer Under Government Controls

Before Hitler, we had very good medical care. Many American doctors trained at the University of Vienna . After Hitler, health care was socialized, free for everyone. Doctors were salaried by the government. The problem was, since it was free, the people were going to the doctors for everything. When the good doctor arrived at his office at 8 a.m., 40 people were already waiting and, at the same time, the hospitals were full. If you needed elective surgery, you had to wait a year or two for your turn. There was no money for research as it was poured into socialized medicine. Research at the medical schools literally stopped, so the best doctors left Austria and emigrated to other countries.

As for healthcare, our tax rates went up to 80% of our income. Newlyweds immediately received a $1,000 loan from the government to establish a household. We had big programs for families. All day care and education were free. High schools were taken over by the government and college tuition was subsidized. Everyone was entitled to free handouts, such as food stamps, clothing, and housing.

We had another agency designed to monitor business. My brother-in-law owned a restaurant that had square tables. Government officials told him he had to replace them with round tables because people might bump themselves on the corners. Then they said he had to have additional bathroom facilities. It was just a small dairy business with a snack bar. He couldn't meet all the demands. Soon, he went out of business. If the government owned the large businesses and not many small ones existed, it could be in control.

We had consumer protection. We were told how to shop and what to buy. Free enterprise was essentially abolished. We had a planning agency specially designed for farmers. The agents would go to the farms, count the livestock, then tell the farmers what to produce, and how to produce it.

Mercy Killing Redefined

In 1944, I was a student teacher in a small village in the Alps. The villagers were surrounded by mountain passes which, in the winter, were closed off with snow, causing people to be isolated. So people intermarried and offspring were sometimes retarded. When I arrived, I was told there were 15 mentally retarded adults, but they were all useful and did good manual work. I knew one, named Vincent, very well. He was a janitor of the school. One day I looked out the window and saw Vincent and others getting into a van. I asked my superior where they were going. She said to an institution where the State Health Department would teach them a trade, and to read and write. The families were required to sign papers with a little clause that they could not visit for 6 months. They were told visits would interfere with the program and might cause homesickness.

As time passed, letters started to dribble back saying these people died a natural, merciful death. The villagers were not fooled. We suspected what was happening. Those people left in excellent physical health and all died within 6 months. We called this euthanasia.

Next came gun registration. People were getting injured by guns. Hitler said that the real way to catch criminals (we still had a few) was by matching serial numbers on guns. Most citizens were law abiding and dutifully marched to the police station to register their firearms. Not long after-wards, the police said that it was best for everyone to turn in their guns. The authorities already knew who had them, so it was futile not to comply voluntarily.

No more freedom of speech. Anyone who said something against the government was taken away. We knew many people who were arrested, not only Jews, but also priests and ministers who spoke up. Totalitarianism didn't come quickly, it took 5 years from 1938 until 1943, to realize full dictatorship in Austria. Had it happened overnight, my countrymen would have fought to the last breath. Instead, we had creeping gradualism. Now, our only weapons were broom handles. The whole idea sounds almost unbelievable that the state, little by little eroded our freedom.

After World War II, Russian troops occupied Austria. Women were raped, preteen to elderly. The press never wrote about this either. When the Soviets left in 1955, they took everything that they could, dismantling whole factories in the process. They sawed down whole orchards of fruit, and what they couldn't destroy, they burned. We called it The Burned Earth. Most of the population barricaded themselves in their houses. Women hid in their cellars for 6 weeks as the troops mobilized. Those who couldn't, paid the price. There is a monument in Vienna today, dedicated to those women who were massacred by the Russians.

This is an eyewitness account. It's true those of us who sailed past the Statue of Liberty came to a country of unbelievable freedom and opportunity. America Truly is the Greatest Country in the World. Don't Let Freedom Slip Away!

Chapter 8
The *Mall of Life* – Part 2
Fatal Financing

Barter, the concept of exchanging something of value you can spare, to get something else of value you need, has probably been around since the dawn of civilization. At some point back in the days of caves, Ug may have had a stone but wanted a stick. If he ran into Lee, who had a stick but wanted a stone, a mutually satisfying Ug-Lee trade ensued. While not necessarily enshrined as the official means of transacting business in any society, barter predates the notion of hard currency. It's a good deal when both parties believe what they're getting is as good or better than what they'll give.

A big part of what makes the system work is the recognition of the value of labor. Though arguments exist on how to determine its worth, it is irrefutable that your time is a commodity. Be it obvious— such the week you spent working for a yak farmer in exchange for one of his furry cows, or subtle— the time it took you to turn an otherwise worthless wooden box into an ornate storage container; for hoards of us, time is the most worthwhile thing we can bring to the barter table. The IRS apparently never got the memo.

From the government's standpoint, time is worthless. If it were anything but, you'd be able to deduct the value of your labor from the income derived from it. Some tax protestors believe you can do just that. The IRS firmly disagrees. Apparently broadcasters in the 1950s didn't get that memo, either. Radio management had plenty of unsold time, so the idea of trading it in exchange for needed supplies was appealing. It worked so well, barter houses sprung up offering everything from Teletype paper to automobiles, and even the occasional traffic helicopter.

The barter company made their money by selling the commercial time they got in the deal. They'd stay far away from the station's client base, but would attract other advertisers by offering deeply discounted rates. Barter firms could make these markdowns and nevertheless profit handsomely because broadcasters were willing to give up the retail equivalent of significantly more commercial minutes than the items they received were worth. Radio management thoroughly understood that idle inventory couldn't be saved or reused. (I've long had a fantasy that I could walk into the "Time Store" and buy a weekend, or a Wednesday, or a couple spare hours. But failing a quantum leap in quantum physics, I'm resigned to a life where once time passes, it's gone forever.)

Broadcasters figured the price of their commercial time more than offset the value of what they received, and gave it no further thought. Perhaps they didn't discuss it with their accountants, or their accountants failed to contact the government. Had they investigated the tax code, they would have claimed the worth of the goods they received, as straight income. Of course, that would have made barter considerably less attractive, but they would have stayed out of jail. Though you can say it on the radio, "jail" is definitely one of those four-letter words that everyone wants to avoid. Nobody willingly buys "jail" in the *Mall of Life*. After a few convictions led to serving time, barter was finished… at least for a while.

In less than two decades, barter came back in a more insidious way. This time the IRS was satisfied with the terms, though broadcasters shouldn't have been. As before, the payment by the station was unsold commercial avails. But instead of receiving taxable goods or services in return, they got programs. In many ways, it resembled the agreements made by network affiliates for the sponsored shows they aired.

It's somewhat ironic that syndicated product became

a desirable commodity at all. After the advent of television, independent radio stations differentiated themselves from the new medium by eschewing anything national. They based their success on formats that were consistent, local and live. The shows offered by networks or syndicators lacked at least two of the three.

The program that created the first tiny crack in radio's prevailing logic was heard in the summer of 1970 on seven stations. It was *American Top 40,* produced by newcomer Watermark, and it was a good fit for contemporary radio. It counted down the same hits played by its affiliates, in an entertaining and professional manner. Better yet, the three-hour show could air during a day-part where it was difficult to find good local talent. Sunday mornings or evenings became the slots of choice. The pricing structure was acceptable: a strictly cash deal geared towards the station's market size. It wasn't long before the show began amassing clearance on top-notch outlets in large metropolitan areas. There was no downside. It was a great *Mall of Life* purchase.

Across town from Watermark's studio, six years after *American Top 40's* debut, Norm Pattiz was sitting in his Westwood apartment, unemployed. Going back into television sales held little interest for him, but increasingly he saw a gaping hole in radio syndication. Major stations would pay for special programming, but lesser outlets had no budget. Whether Pattiz knew of broadcasting's disastrous barter history was irrelevant, since the stations he would target had bigger problems to tackle. They'd ask few questions about free programming, and he'd make money selling the commercials embedded in it to national advertisers— if he could clear enough markets. Suffice it to say, in clearance, his creativity blossomed.

Pattiz' first offering for his new company, Westwood One, was an ambitious 24-hour review of Motown Records. *The Sound of Motown* was remarkable for its lack of focus.

Neither chronological nor alphabetical, the most you could say for it was it was free. But that was enough. Pattiz proved that the quality of a show was secondary, perhaps tertiary, to the marketing behind it. It was a concept, which would reverberate throughout the industry. The sales end of *The Sound of Motown* was flawless, or as flawless as it gets when Annie Green Springs wine is your primary sponsor. Jokes aside, with this program, Pattiz brought barter back to radio.

Revenue for successful radio stations traditionally came from two sources of advertising— local and national, and local rates often paled by what a national advertiser could be charged. But for lower rated facilities or stations outside the mainstream, it was rhetorical. National dollars were practically non-existent. Pattiz saw his niche. He focused his early efforts on two formats: soul and progressive. "Soul," then a euphemism for black-formatted stations, in much the same way as "urban" is today, was bereft of national buys regardless of how many people listened. It seemed that airlines didn't even want this audience sitting on the back of their planes.

Progressive stations didn't fare better, though the reasons were more rational. Having recently transitioned from a free-form underground approach where everyone, including the local waterbed emporium, thought twice about buying time; the format was not the force it would later become when it advanced into album rock.

Pattiz built an empire on fulfilling the needs of the stations others ignored. For them, there was no hesitation— they got something they couldn't otherwise afford and they didn't lose any business they could have attained. Pattiz' programs did so well that by the close of the '70s, his shows, and the barter deal that came with them, were placed on mainstream stations. Now the game would change, but broadcasters were blissfully unaware of what was to come. By the mid-'80s, barter was the means of

exchange for national content across the radio spectrum.

Once Pattiz, and others following in his footsteps, played in the big leagues, they were able to target top-tier advertisers savvy enough to measure coverage in reach and frequency. Several spots in a weekend show would certainly give a sponsor "frequency" (the number of times their ad was heard)— but as for "reach" (the number of different people who heard it), they'd need better commercial placement. That dilemma was easily solved by requiring stations to run the daily promotional announcements supplied with the "free" programs. In actuality, these promos were little more than thinly disguised ads for the show's sponsors, but few broadcasters complained.

As advertisers realized they could avoid the high national rates charged by mainstream stations and continue to be on them, it was a win-win deal for sponsors and syndicators, but a silent loss for radio. Before broadcasters could grasp their semi-suicidal role in the barter arrangement, their need for content loomed larger. Particularly for AM stations, many of which were spiraling downward due to the increased attractiveness of FM's superior fidelity and generally wider coverage, satellite delivered programming was a blessing. For successful stations, it was not yet a remote consideration to air a national program during daylight hours on a weekday, but as the 1980s wore on, fewer AM stations approached anything resembling success.

(For historical sake: while the local-live paradigm remained intact on thriving foreground facilities, automated programming from national sources became quite profitable for the background sound of easy listening. In fact, the first two FM stations ever to rise to the top of the ratings in any market, both relied on Schulke's syndicated beautiful music format. WEAT in West Palm Beach and WOOD in Grand Rapids simultaneously achieved that milestone in 1970 with what was derisively called "elevator music.")

With insufficient revenue to hire a quality air staff, getting free programming was an offer struggling AM facilities couldn't refuse. But outlets relying on shows originating elsewhere and heard everywhere, took a firm back seat to their locally programmed counterparts. That a second tier AM station airing national product would give up a good portion of its advertising time to content providers, made no more waves than soul or progressive stations did when they struck that bargain a decade earlier. Rush Limbaugh was the game changer.

Outside observers may think that Rush Limbaugh's historical claim is how he shaped the political landscape for talk radio. They'd be wrong. Undoubtedly, his politics struck an emotional chord with frustrated Americans at just the right time, but that's not the point. Nor is it relevant to argue, as insiders long have, whether, instead of Rush's conservative bent, it was his ability to entertainingly state his case that separated him from other talkers.

It's a given that Rush's phraseology is compelling. Words like "feminazi" remain in the listener's mind much longer that anyone's thoughts on feminism. And Rush's pacing is impeccable, leaving no question as to his former career as a rock and roll disc jockey, influenced in his youth by on-air legends including Chicago's Larry Lujack. (Lujack, ever the proud liberal, cringes at the association.)

But putting Rush's many talents into proper perspective, Limbaugh will forever be enshrined in the annals of broadcasting for a much bigger feat: his show single-handedly negated radio's local-live edict.

What broadcasters wanted when they demanded radio hosts be local and live, was programming that would relate to their audience. Rush's success proved relevance need not be tied to geography, nor did it have to be live—providing the show wasn't recorded so far in advance that it sounded dated. It didn't even have to be exclusive, as long as it wasn't heard on another station in the same market.

But broadcasters weren't immediately convinced. In fact Rush's flagship station, WABC, initially made him do two shows— a two-hour block heard locally in New York, and another two-hour portion offered to other markets, most notably Los Angeles' KFI.

Limbaugh's show was syndicated under the same barter arrangement Westwood One formulated in the 1970s. But the difference was Rush was cleared during the day on highly rated stations. For national advertisers, a good deal became a great one. It took a couple years for Rush to gain momentum but as the '90s emerged, he was a runaway hit. By then, he was accompanied by a handful of hot shows trailing him. Suddenly, radio stations, which relied predominantly on syndicated programming, were market leaders.

That's when it should have become obvious: radio made a terrible buy in the *Mall of Life* by trading inventory for programming. The real price for free shows was the decimation of national business. Games were played, numbers were shifted, but in the end, the lucrative river of spots on local stations purchased directly by national sponsors, had dwindled to a trickle. Previously, many competing firms represented the interests of local radio stations in securing national buys. Now, there is effectively one.

Radio fell victim to the financing trap, which can best be summed up by a question: when you mortgage tomorrow to pay for today, what happens next week? Ask any homeowner close to foreclosure to explain the pitfalls. Leaving aside difficult discussions about what other choices, if any, radio could have made; the fact remains that the choice the industry did make was extremely expensive. But radio is somewhat unique in its unwitting willingness to enter into fatal arrangements repeatedly, and on some occasions, simultaneously.

The lunacy is by no means limited to sales.

Program directors have been equally guilty. Regarding demographics, programmers didn't mortgage tomorrow—they extinguished it. If you analyze the marketing plan behind almost any success story, you'll see that one of the key components is long-term growth. While radio has a lot of company in focusing on quelling immediate fires, the understanding that future success comes from current actions is a basic principle. If a baseball team stopped kids from attending their games today, would anyone be in the stands 25 years from now? It may absurd, but it's exactly what radio did when the ratings methodology changed decades ago.

Once buyers of commercial time believed, correctly or not, they were able to target specific prospects, no longer was it sufficient for a station to be #1. Now it had to be #1 in a given demographic, which 35 years ago was often females 25-34. New formats sprung up geared to these gals, and many existing outlets tweaked their sounds to be more compatible with what was thought to be their tastes. As former market leaders started to lose audience share, programmers attempted to turn their overall loss into a narrow gain by explaining, *"but we blew off all our teens!"*

The problem with that logic should be self-evident. The 30 year-old female in 1975, was 15 in 1960. She grew up at a time when radio was aimed right at her. She was steeped in the listening habit from childhood. If it was hard to attract her at 30, how difficult would it be to lure a gal who would reach that age in 1990, when her experience with the medium going back to her youth was that radio was not meant for her? Talk about your bad *Mall of Life* payment plan.

For decades, it appeared radio would escape the fallout from its folly. Baby boomers were the bulk of the population, and advertisers aged with them. Within a few years, the 25-34 year old female target was replaced with 25-54 year old adults, where it remains. But now there are

much greater radio concerns than aging boomers, and most are a direct result of broadcasters willing to use tomorrow as their currency. It's a bad deal in any circumstance, made worse when that currency is radio's total source of revenue. One wonders whether the industry realized they were demonizing the only income stream they had, and not inadvertently, at that.

Prior to the 1970s, commercials were part of a radio station's programming. Countless ads were entertaining unto themselves, featuring memorable jingles sung by the stars of the day. The content, in the best instances, was catchy and funny. Some spots, indeed, were awful. But even those that shrieked, *"We Paint Any Car! Any Color! $19.95!!"* had a sense of style, albeit bad. Those days are long gone. Today radio competes with everything from CD players and iTunes, to commercial free satellite competitors and Internet streams. But long before those indirect competitors surfaced, broadcasters clearly believed their listeners deplored commercials, and it seems they left no trick untried in confirming that *'ad equals bad'*.

Arguably, the first time a radio station built their entire promotional push around the pledge not to play commercials, or at least not as many of them as a competitor, came in 1971 when Bartell Broadcasting purchased an FM station in Miami. Changing the format to Top 40 and targeting the entrenched AM market leader, the station relied on a singular pledge: *"WMYQ plays less commercials!"* It was a painless promise to make, since they didn't have advertisers waiting in line to buy any.

Before long, it appeared that contemporary radio was waging the battle of who could earn less. Especially with market sales leaders, management would not condone any such stance, so it came down to programming creativity to make it appear a station was airing fewer ads. Rather than intersperse commercials throughout the hour with music and patter, programmers would cluster several ads

together. That enabled them to offer promises, including a *'20 minute music sweep,'* without being disemboweled by the sales department.

At first, both the music sweeps and the ad clusters were relatively short. Later, commercial breaks became over six minutes long, in too many cases. Adding to the popularity of clustering, or more aptly cloistering, was the somewhat misguided belief that ratings tabulation could be favorably manipulated by strategic commercial placement. I'll spare you the details and get back to what you hear on the air.

Programmers presume the audience will go to the competition during a lengthy festival of ads. But they reason, when a competitor is in their own commercial break, listeners will return and the next music sweep will hold them for a while. That wasn't as sure a deal, as Todd Storz running the news five minutes before his rivals, but assuming it's a magic world where it's possible for a station's clusters to be so exquisitely timed that they end moments before a competitor's break starts, it's still a horrible disservice to the people paying the bills.

The execution of the commercial free mantra strongly reinforced the listeners' contention that commercials are undesirable— and by clumping so many ads together, programmers guaranteed that very little of their audience survived to hear them. I've joked for years, if the CIA wanted to transmit state secrets to operatives, they should buy the third commercial scheduled in any break on a music station. For all most listeners know, the government may be doing it already. That's hardly a good value for the very entities keeping a station on the air.

While it's undeniable that advertisers have been affected by this programming ploy whether they realize it or not, and quite arguable listeners have been as well, it's debatable that ratings were impacted to any major degree. But supposing broadcasters found a way to purchase

exponentially larger ratings in the *Mall of Life*— was the price of lessening their ability to provide value to paying clients, worth it? It's not my place to ponder anyone else's decisions, particularly when I'm the beneficiary of them.

For advertisers that can measure results, being in a bundle of commercials is unappealing. It's irrelevant to those sponsors if a station is #1. Their sole currency is cash register ratings. All they want to know is how many people called, came to their location, or purchased their product, after hearing their ad. My track record is unbeatable. Comparing what I charge to what I deliver, I think I can safely say that no one comes close.

Building credibility for my endorsements by accepting only the advertisers I believe are trustworthy, my clients further benefit when I'm able to integrate their plugs into program content. That can be very dicey, and it works much better with talk than it would with music formats, but it's possible to blend ads and entertainment in any arena. Until mining the possibilities replaces finding ways to hide them, the sponsor will be short changed. Is it any wonder advertisers look to print, direct mail, billboards, and increasingly, the Internet, as alternatives to radio, to get their message out?

Then there are times that the fatal *Mall of Life* price does come down to how much money you paid. The Baltimore Orioles had a front row seat for the disaster that was WCBM. When Resort Broadcasters bought the facility from Metromedia in 1986, long gone were its beloved personalities, and the audience for the music they played. What was purchased was an AM station with a good dial position at 680, and absolutely nothing else.

Resort's president, Ellek Seymour, acquired the facility with venture capital funding. The price was not an issue. Seymour was heady with expectation from the continual escalation of radio properties everywhere in the 1980s. But it wasn't what he paid that was the biggest

problem. It was Seymour, who felt he could do no wrong, while Baltimore radio vets knew he was doing nothing right. They referred to his company as "Last Resort Broadcasters." Ellek unwittingly confirmed their criticism.

Looking at the growth of talk radio everywhere, Seymour noted that AM stations featuring play-by-play coverage of local major league sports teams, did very well—sometimes outperforming FM competitors. The ratings gains, which could be reaped from such coverage, were so plain to Ellek that he wanted the rights to the Baltimore Orioles in the worst way. That's the way he'd get them.

For a decade, WFBR was the radio home of the Orioles, but the rights were expiring prior to the 1987 season. It was no secret the 50,000 watt big gun in town, WBAL, wanted them. Adding spice to the bidding war, a successful easy listening FM station, WLIF, took a shot. The overriding logic was that the Orioles would go to WBAL.

Although WFBR managed to build a credible sports-talk approach around the team, the station had 5,000 directional watts at 1300, and comparatively limited billing. They were seen as being unable, or perhaps too wise, to attempt to match WBAL's offer. No one saw WCBM coming, and if they had, no one could have imagined what Seymour would pay. Ellek entered the arena so focused on what he wanted to buy that his only concern was outbidding everyone else. All he could see was the Orioles would be the turnaround ticket for his virtually unrated station. He never considered the real cost if the results fell short. He was positively elated when he won.

Changing WCBM's format to news/talk to better compliment the games was no small investment either. The ratings did see an up-tick, but it was hardly at the needed level. There was no way revenue could cover expenses. During the second Orioles season in 1988, WCBM went dark, as in: off the air, turn off the lights.

Assuming Seymour had not completely lost his mind,

it's probable his justification for his big ticket into the big league was centered on the *Mall of Life*'s fatal financing plan. He thought he would be billing enough in the future to cover what he couldn't yet afford. Was he much different from the millions of homeowners who were sure their income would rise before their adjustable mortgage reset?

But Seymour's distracted decision during the Orioles bidding war resembles a ten-cent purchase compared to the insanity, which ensued after the 1996 Telecommunications Act became law. As it routinely does, government logic proved itself to be oxymoronic, and at the heart of this saga.

While even school kids understand the concept of supply and demand, in practice it's never that simple. Numerous influences affect both sides of the formula, but the greatest warp comes from artificial controls. Wherever you stand on the "War on Drugs," for instance, it's incontestable that by restricting the ability to obtain a substance, the price of it rises stratospherically. Most government action is less obvious. To explain what Congress did to broadcasters in 1996, which many radio owners celebrated at the time, it helps to know that station licenses have always been heavily controlled.

As radio began to rebound from the blow dealt by television, it was not unusual to see a dead facility turn into a cash cow. Some people bought stations solely to beef them up and sell them. In 1962, the FCC put a stop to that by requiring an owner to hold a license for three years. The intent was to protect the public's interest. The inadvertent effect was to suppress station prices, as financing options are limited when investors can't quickly cash out. Further impacting station values, the FCC greatly limited the number of licenses any one owner could hold, which made broadcasting unattractive to big money interests.

Since the government put an absolute cap on supply by determining how many stations existed— decreasing demand through restrictive regulations, likely helped create

a reasonably equal supply-demand ratio. The 1980s saw a handful of changes to both sides of the formula, but in 1996, the future came knocking, with opportunity in one hand and destruction in the other.

The passage of the Telecom Act effectively ended the limit on how many stations a licensee could own. Had our lawmakers significantly increased the amount available, the result may have been lower prices. But nothing in the legislation addressed that. With the stroke of a pen, Congress created an unparalleled feeding frenzy.

Licensees realized, with a competitor's ability to control a big chunk of a market, they either had to sell what they owned or buy several more. And since the supply was limited, they had to do it quickly. With no time to explore the results of their actions, broadcasters were convinced they could use tomorrow to pay for today.

In any business, there are only two ways to improve cash flow. One is by boosting income. The other is by lowering expenses. It's easy to reduce expenditures when you're gobbling up additional properties. It's known as the economy of scale, but it can be insidious to the bottom line for two reasons: one is that gains can be misread as coming from increased revenue. The other is the idea that decreasing the cost of doing business can be continued indefinitely.

It's doubtful many investors took any of that into account. In their rush for rapid returns, it was enough to know that prices paid for radio stations were rising exponentially. Broadcasters knew they couldn't cut costs to zero, but they were at ease with the notion their earnings would increase substantially. A notion was all it was. Initially, the future looked rosy. The first few years of operation offered a myriad of ways to trim expenses. But not long after broadcasters got to the point where they had to successfully run the facilities for which they grossly overpaid— an impossible feat in almost any circumstance,

the economy tanked.

Ironically, the rotten economy is the broadcasters' best friend. Unless growth increased beyond the most optimistic forecasts, many station owners would never have been able to live up to their lenders' expectations. Had that occurred in good times, numerous players would have been ready to scoop up their ashes. Out with the old, in with the grave-dancers.

But in the current economy, bankers have no choice but to renegotiate the terms with those 'who brung 'em to the dance.' No one is happy, and everyone's to blame. Acquiring a radio station is essentially no different than buying anything else, but the intricacies go far to mask the ubiquitous admonishment: if you can't make the payments, don't sign up for the plan.

In the *Mall of Life,* your prospects for success are elevated when you know that with no change for the better and perhaps a change for the worse, you can pay for what you get. As limiting as that sounds to anyone lacking substantial assets, remember: the payment for most of what you want in the *Mall of Life* won't be made in dollars. It's as you've heard, money won't buy you happiness. But there are other ways to seal the deal.

Chapter 9
The Essence of Happiness

With the risk of mimicking the off the wall denizens of the psychic hotlines, I now proclaim (in my best Miss Cleo-esque accent): *"Ahhh, yes. Yes! I can see it! I can visualize all the cause for your misery. I can tell you precisely what makes you unhappy and always has*!"

Granted, "*The Great Rollini*" will not threaten the soothsaying community, but none in it can touch my accuracy rate. When it comes to unhappiness— yours, mine, anyone on the planet's, unhappiness— past, present and future; I know the cause. And I'm right 100% of the time.

OK, end of fanfare. I don't look good in the cape and hat anyway. And yes, in part, it is a trick answer, though it's also the absolute truth. So here's the deal: all your unhappiness comes from your thoughts.

And right now, I'm thinking I know what you're thinking. It's probably something along the lines of, to clean it up and make it quaint: *"Balderdash!"* But before you conclude that all your unhappiness cannot possibly arise from the content of your thoughts, before you bring forth countless examples to prove me wrong, hear me out.

First the exclusions: This does not include people with true mental illness. Delusions are not real. For folks who think they are, those who build the oft-cited castles in the sky and promptly move into them, all bets are off. People spend years in school and a fortune in tuition to deal with that. Count me out.

This also does not include individuals with chemical imbalances. There's no shortage of television commercials for various SSRI drugs, the class of anti-depressants that are all the rage, though the required mention of side effects alone could depress the happiest among us. If you find

yourself continually blue and down, fatigued and empty: suspect your biology. In addition to the much ballyhooed brain chemicals, anything in your endocrine system can be the culprit. Hypothyroidism is notorious for it, and it's frequently overlooked. So, if you're continually depressed, forget my advice. See a physician. In addition to allopathic medicine, consider homeopathy and naturopathy.

And finally, my premise does not minimize the impetus for your thoughts. It might be disappointment in your own behavior or that of someone else. It could be failure or the loss of something precious, or frustration from not having what you want and the apparent inability to get it. Whatever it is, though highly important to you, is inconsequential to my supposition. I won't dispute that something very real is behind your unhappiness, nor will I question the appropriateness of your emotional reaction.

Feeling pain is not only normal, it's a blessing that provides us with an excellent early warning system. While no sane person courts it, pain screams to us that something is wrong. We know it well when it's physical. We focus on its cause and how to alleviate it. But when pain is emotional, we're often ill equipped to understand its message and what to do about it.

No doubt, you're aware of *what* you think, but it can be a big help to understand *how* you think. Admittedly, I'm in no position to give expert advice, though the debate is hardly settled among those who are. Even my initial declaration, that your unhappiness is a product of your thoughts, causes arguments.

In psychological terms, the concept is known as CBT, Cognitive Behavioral Theory, and it goes back a couple thousand years to the time of Greek Stoicism when philosophers such as Epictetus claimed men are not disturbed by things, but by the view they take of them. Sigmund Freud had other ideas.

There's an old joke among psychiatrists (and

psychotherapists of all stripe), that they go into the study of the mind to examine, in particular, their own. No one punctuated that point better than Freud. Clearly a man with issues, he nevertheless was able to sway entire psychological communities toward his belief that our mental dilemmas, instead of responses to the obvious, come from deep within our subconscious.

Freud developed psychoanalysis as a method for uncovering the root of his patients' troubles. But by using his method, where a subject endlessly meanders down mental memory lane, it could take awhile before anyone got to the root of anything. And on top of that, a hundred years ago Freud had some very risqué ideas about where those roots led.

In the 1950s, Alfred Ellis had his fill of psychotherapy. He returned to stoicism as a way to quickly get to the heart of any emotional matter, with what he termed RET, "*Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy*," where what you think determines how you feel, not vice versa. Even Freudian analysts, notably Albert Adler, admitted Ellis was on to something. A decade later, Aaron Beck further refined the approach. Beck's take, "*Cognitive Therapy*," made waves in the medical community for how effective it was in treating depression.

Although the chicken and egg argument (in this case whether thoughts create bad feelings or the reverse) will go on forever, what matters is the cognitive premise works. In the 1980s, David Burns, had a best selling book based on it, "*Feeling Good.*" If nothing else, the idea is logical. That your thoughts create your emotions, goes far to explain why one person is highly stressed and another is relaxed, while both face the same stimulus. Ken Keyes took it a step further. He contended he knew what specific thinking got us into trouble.

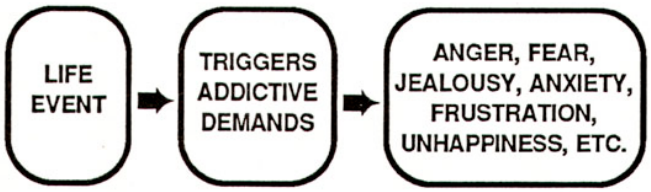
The concept that the mind's reaction, opposed to the external event itself, is the cause of unhappiness, is hardly

confined to scientific discourse. It's a good chunk of the self-empowerment movement and an essential component in various religions. Keyes was studying the latter, Buddhism specifically, when he was transformed by what he learned.

Ken grew up in Miami Beach with all the benefits affluence could bring. But polio was an equal opportunity attacker and the result for Keyes was quadriplegia. Although his wealth and sexual appetite remained intact, increasingly he was satisfied with neither. His quest for fulfillment lasted throughout his lifetime, resulting in several books, three learning centers, and thousands of students, until his death in 1995.

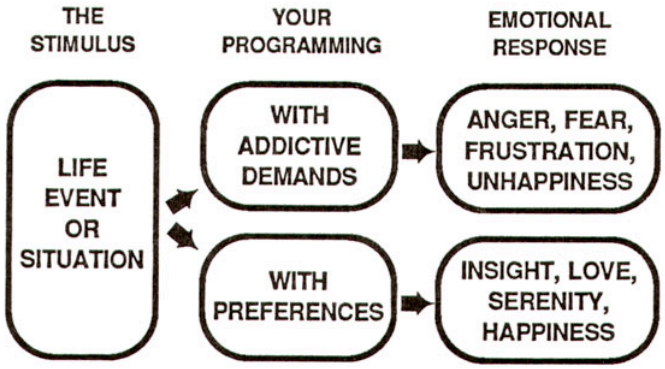
Ken found the answer for which he was searching, in the Four Noble Truths according to Buddha. Blending the spiritual principle of non-attachment with the premise of cognitive scientists, Keyes developed the belief that all unhappiness comes from your expectations.

Keyes postulated we all have our own take on the world, and we expect others to conform to it. When they don't, we're unhappy. Our emotion-backed demands cause our unhappiness, not the people in our lives or ourselves. And how unhappy we are is a function of how addicted we are to our demand that a given person act in the way we would like:



Keyes spent his life teaching the antidote to that paradigm, and by all accounts, he was his own student. Whether he got to where he wanted to go is beside the point. Those who can follow his advice are better off for it. If we can transform our addictive demands into mere preferences, then while we'd like a given outcome, we will not be unhappy if we do not get it.

Here are your choices:



Easier said than done, as are all those diets. If we know eating less will cause us to lose weight, why don't we do it? Though not specifically addressing that question, Abraham Maslow's work goes far to answer it.

There's quite a bit of discussion over the validity of Maslow's *"Hierarchy of Needs,"* but the basis for his concept is irrefutable. We listen to the loudest voice in our heads. Maslow separated our drives into five rungs, the first being basic physiology. If you can't breathe, nothing else matters. The same is true for eating, sleeping, and anything that comes down to sustenance.

From there, most people concern themselves with

their safety and security issues, then their partnership, friendship and family concerns, followed by their esteem needs, and finally, their self-actualization. The arguments against the hierarchy are obvious. Once we're past survival, all bets are off. And that's assuming we're relatively psychologically healthy.

While the particulars will vary considerably from person to person, the point is that your mind is your willing servant and it dances to the loudest drummer. Your weight loss plan fails, because the voice telling you to chow down while you're eating the forbidden food, drowns out the one whispering, "Diet."

And no matter how external the stimulus may appear, the loudest voice generally springs from our internal programming. To look at Maslow another way, our survival needs are instinctual. Much as animals are programmed to do what is in their best interest— for instance, bears packing on weight for hibernation, or the climate-related migration of birds, such activities are sole voices. No analytical input is required.

But when we move higher up the chain of evolution, farther along Maslow's need chart, we develop a chorus in our mind, which emanates from our ability to analyze our desires. Analytical skills certainly separate humans from animals, but for all the higher good our discernment and self-recognition might bring us, guaranteeing we'll act in our best interest is not on the list.

Not surprisingly, there are numerous approaches to directing our mental choir. Distilled to its basic essence, it's a question of how to control your mind, so your mind will not control you. There is no shortage of disciplines that claim to offer answers. All fall into two categories. They either force or allow.

When taming the mind, we can attempt to adhere to stringent rules, or choose to create our own path. For most of us, the problem with rules is eventually our

contrary inner voice will win out. And the problem with self-direction is we're long on self, and short on direction.

But there is a way to successfully combine the two. You need to find something more compelling than your established habits. Goals and a timeline are great for that. Fate gave both to Mary. (I've changed the names in this saga and you'll see why, but its accuracy remains.) Attracted to radio in college, Mary spent the 1970s taking any job she could get. Though an upscale, east coast gal, more reminiscent of a model than a disc jockey, she found her calling in the improbable genre of country.

Advising the truckers who listened, *'Before the end of the night, I'll have you driving with one hand,'* Mary's own life was yet more erotic and chaotic. That's when her battle with weight began. After one bad boyfriend too many, she let herself go. Rebounding fairly quickly, she was a stunning sight at the annual broadcaster's convention in 1980. That's where she met Arthur. Fresh off his first divorce from a high-powered beauty, he should have known better.

But Arthur saw something he had to have. Mary was not as enamored. However Arthur was a good person, offering something she had never experienced: stability. A year or so later, on those questionable grounds, they both said I do. But Mary didn't, at least not fully.

Not surprisingly, Mary began to gain weight. Quite surprisingly, Arthur didn't care. Though he adored shapely women, he loved Mary alone. She tried repeatedly to drop the pounds with no noticeable achievement over the ensuing decade. Then, from seemingly out of the blue, Mary suddenly slimmed down to a size six. She updated her wardrobe and hairstyle, and was more beautiful than before. Arthur was thrilled.

If he understood the way humans think, Arthur should have been suspicious. For Mary to lose the weight, she would have had to find something more compelling

yelling, “Diet,” than the voice steadily screaming, “Eat!” And if she had, it’s a good bet Arthur would have known it. But he had no clue. Which was exactly how she wanted it.

What happened was Mary got a phone call from Phil, her college sweetheart. He was the infamous ‘one that got away,’ the lost love from which Mary never recovered. Twenty years after they parted, he tracked her down, told her how much he missed her, and let her know he was being transferred nearby. He’d be arriving in three months, and hoped they could meet for lunch.

Need I elaborate about what happened to the voices in Mary’s head? By the time Phil arrived, she was ready. But a month later Arthur wasn’t, when she said goodbye.

Mary and Phil were together for many years. After the initial infatuation wore off, the diet voice receded. And without the conscious ability to create the same sense of urgency she felt when she first heard from Phil, there was a lot more of Mary to love.

What Mary needed to know was how to create the same pressure when nothing was on the horizon. At 60 years old, she still hasn’t found it. While she’s largely content with her life, a common topic of discussion is her next weight loss scheme. It’s a given she’ll fail, though with effort she can change that outcome.

Rather than deliberate raw foods verses low carbs, Mary needs to get clear on why she wants to maintain a certain body weight. It seems self-evident, but it’s far from it. She thinks she knows, but if she were to make a list tomorrow, other than ‘I’d look and feel better,’ nothing would be on it. Those are motivators, but they’re too amorphous to matter.

Mary needs to find something, which overwhelmingly compels her to reduce. That’s the missing link for all dieters. And the answer is specific to each of them. Once Mary can determine what’s in it for her to lose weight, she needs to turn her attention to what’s in it for her to eat.

At this point, craving a meal outweighs the willpower to abstain— but why? She won't know until she thoroughly understands what eating means to her. Much of what she'll discover will deal with the emotions surrounding food, which are numerous.

Mary knows she wants to buy 'proper nutrition' in the *Mall of Life,* but she's probably intimidated by what she'll have to pay. She's also wrong. To most dieters, it's all or nothing, and eventually human nature intercedes. Unless it's truly an 'I'll die from eating this' proposition, the thought of never having that favorite, fattening food again, will not begin to stifle the 'eat it now' voice.

But if Mary includes a weekly cheat meal in her *Mall of Life* payment, when the 'eat the feast' voice rises, she can dwell on how much she'll enjoy it soon, rather than fight a battle over having it 'now or never,' and that will further strengthen her resolve to stay on track.

In all cases, we're talking about how best to shift your focus. The sheer volume of advice on how it's done is a testament to how crucial it is to your success. But no matter which motivational guru or what method you choose to reframe your desires, your success will come down to how well you define your choices and how important it is to have the one you want.

From trying to develop the discipline to finish what you start, to attempting to forget a lost love, you can resolve every emotional hurdle you'll encounter by reprogramming your thoughts. You have the ability to choose the loudest voice within, once you understand how it speaks to you.

Beyond content, there are two additional factors that come into play. One of them is comparable to the difference between instinctive and analytical thinking: it's either passive or active. The other is time.

In passive mode, you go with the flow, drinking in your surroundings without analysis, remaining in the present. In active mode, you interpret events, processing

their effect on you, by projecting to the future or reflecting on the past.

Both types of thought are vital to our existence. When you're making a decision or tackling a problem, it's crucial to analyze the issue. We've talked a lot about how to do that in previous chapters. But the time you spend engaged in constructive deliberation over anything is a small part of your day.

The problem for most of us is we're stuck in analytical mode, constructing and deconstructing every possible outcome of any vexing scenario, real or imagined. The result is rarely if ever positive. Instead of insight, we're assured anxiety. We have another choice, to live in the moment, though seldom do we realize it.

A lot has been written on that too, but Richard Carlson and Joseph Bailey nailed it in their book, "*Slowing Down To The Speed Of Life*." Without making tangible changes, simply by going with the flow, you not only increase your enjoyment but your productivity as well.

The idea looks good on paper, though in practice, it's an ingrained reaction for many of us to feel we must constantly analyze all problems, or fall victim to them. Sure, it's possible that enjoying the moment when you should have been analyzing a predicament can foil you, but the overwhelming likelihood is the opposite will be the impediment to your happiness.

You'll know when being in active processing mode is critical. Then it will be appropriate to systematically and creatively analyze your next move. But how often do we miss a warm sunny day, a good meal, or fun conversation, because we cannot stop fixating on a problem? Has there ever once been a time that ruminating on an issue has made it easier to handle, or more effectively solved it?

You know how to lay back. The crux is learning when to do it, which is most of the time. The easiest way to decide between "evaluating" and "enjoying," is to be aware

of your thoughts, and the choice you have in what you're thinking. Firmly keep in mind that 'letting go' is not the same as 'giving up.' It's the difference between rationally analyzing the facts, and being emotionally embroiled in them.

When in doubt, remain in the moment. A well-known Taoist parable proves the folly of anything else: A farmer was laboring in the fields when his only horse ran away. *"How terrible!"* his neighbors exclaimed. *"We'll see,"* said the farmer. The next day, the horse returned with three wild stallions in tow. *"How wonderful!"* his neighbors marveled. *"We'll see,"* said the farmer. The day after that, his son tried to ride one of the wild horses and fell off, breaking his leg. *"How awful!"* his neighbors lamented. *"We'll see,"* said the farmer. A day later, the military came to town to round up all draft age men. They skipped the farmer's son because of his broken leg. His neighbors clamored, *"How lucky!"* And the farmer said, *"We'll see."*

Carlson and Bailey wisely remind us that getting what you want isn't your goal. Being happy is. Not only can staying focused on what's currently around you, be the e-ticket to getting what you really want, but by doing anything else, as the Taoist farmer proved, the result is up for grabs. However, when the noose of negativity is wrapped around your neck, a little specific guidance will go far in removing it.

Chapter 10
The Noose of Negativity

Man's fascination with time travel dates back thousands of years. It's referenced in the century before Christ in both Hindu and Jewish literature, but for the masses, traveling through time began in the late 1800s when H.G. Wells wrote "*The Time Machine*." Apart from the intrusion of his Fabian socialist philosophy, proof that Wells captured the collective imagination of his readers is evidenced over the years in the movies, television shows, and comic books his novel spawned.

From antiquity through Wells' era and beyond, the idea of time travel was decidedly one way. We could go forward but never backward. The last fifty years have witnessed many writers, assorted philosophers, and a goodly chunk of quantum physicists, grappling with going in reverse. The paradox is quite obvious: if it's possible to go back in time, what happens to history should we make a couple changes during our visit? While hotly debated, the cleanest answer comes from the theory of parallel realities, where each revision sets up an alternate trajectory, moving forward along side the familiar and settled one, with an unlimited amount of such trails.

But as science sorts that out, you have the ability to change your past without any ramifications at all. Leaving mental illnesses aside, we all do it, and usually without a clue. Here's how it's possible: your conscious memory is highly selective. Why some things are imprinted on our thoughts and others are not, no one knows for sure. It's the subject of psychological studies, doctoral dissertations, and the basis for various therapies.

Without considering the extremes of repressed memory syndrome, severe trauma, shock, or anything that would have clinical significance, the memories of healthy

people in a joint experience often differ widely. Siblings are the ideal example. Often two kids with verifiably similar childhoods will have vastly different recollections. There's no firm consensus on specifically what's taking place, but at the risk of invoking the chicken and egg debate, common to cognitive theories— it may well be that rather than our current self-image arising from our past memories, we tailor our past memories to fit our self-image.

The implications of that concept are enormous. The wonderfully liberating reality is with forethought, you have the ability to bring back alternate but equally real memories, which can better serve you when happiness is your goal. It is in your power to do what science fiction writers only dreamed, and you don't need a time machine, spells, potions, or any manner of conveyance beyond your own thinking.

This is not about creating an imaginary past, or embracing vapid happy-talk. Reviewing the plethora of experiences in your life, even confining yourself to those you easily remember— why dwell on times of discomfort, loss, or failure, when you can focus on times of triumph, success, and happiness? Seldom will it require therapy. Generally all that's needed is a good mental audit.

Become conscious of your thinking. Each time a negative memory surfaces, replace it with another instance when you shined. It's that simple. Whether you're recounting disappointments caused by others, or self-induced embarrassments, it isn't possible that you cannot also recall an event that made you look and feel terrific. It may be a battle royal for a while, though if you consciously stick to it, you'll start to believe what really is true— you've got a lot of reasons to be happy and proud.

As thorny as remembering the past might be, considering the future can present a bigger challenge to your happiness, particularly when you're oppressed by fear. You've heard the popular acronym: FEAR is False Evidence

Appearing Real. For most of us, when we think back upon past fears, we realize they were nowhere near the big deal we made them out to be. Again, this is not considering truly horrifying, life altering events, though at those thankfully rare critical junctures, most who faced them later report that all was not quite as dire as they imagined. To some extent, we adjust afterwards. To a tremendous degree, we embellish before.

Fear is always concern about something that has not yet happened. We're afraid it will, and we have seemingly endless creativity about how awful it will be. Whether it's worry about the upshot of a past decision, or anxiety over the impact of a future possibility, it's not happening now. And it may never happen, or not in the way we think it will.

No matter what the parameters, fear will not be helpful. It will unrelentingly keep you in processing mode when you should be in the moment, and worse yet, it won't help you determine the best course of action to take.

Fear is an emotion, so it can be a great warning tool. But after it alerts you to a problem you can properly analyze, its continuance is of no value. The easiest way to combat your fears is to remain in the moment. The chances are nearly certain that right now things are not unbearable. Don't take yourself to a place where they are.

While the future can look bleak through the lens of fear, it can also seem rosy through the eyes of hope. And as implausible as it may sound, waiting on good results can be as threatening to your happiness as worrying about bad ones. When we placate ourselves with expectations, such as, "I'll be happy when," and "I'll be happy if," we're confirming our dissatisfaction with right now.

Separate from the given, that happiness is an inside job not based on outward conditions, is the forecasting pitfall. On the earth plane, we live in the present. Yesterday is gone and tomorrow hasn't come. It's a gift that we need not be constrained by anything behind us or

in front of us, unless we choose to be. While we can mentally identify which part of the past we want to embrace, and what kind of future we'd like to create— as far as being a participant in our own lives, our power lies in the present.

When you dwell on what's over or worry about what's next, not only will you rob yourself of the happiness that comes from enjoying the moment— if your thoughts are endlessly focused on a concern not immediately occurring, you'll create a growing feedback loop.

Anyone in radio recognizes the sound: There you are in the production room. You have a tape recorder connected to the control board in such a way that it can be used for both playback and record. No problem, until you try to record with the playback volume up. The sound captured by the tape heads will be amplified by the board, and recaptured again by the tape heads, forming an endless loop that quickly escalates in volume and intensity.

The engineer at WNOE in New Orleans should have pondered that point, when the program director decided to add some reverb in the early '60s. It was a time when radio lived in an AM only world— not that FM didn't exist, just that it didn't matter.

Although many stories surround why FM became a factor, the truth is less glamorous than all of them. It wasn't underground programming or album rock. It was an engineering advancement. FM had a huge problem with frequency drift. Getting a signal to stay in place was nearly impossible. Everything interfered with it, from walking in front of the receiver to changes in temperature.

It's still a wonder why the Cincinnati bus system thought *Transit Radio* would be a good idea over 60 years ago, but Taft Broadcasting had nothing to lose when they programmed WCTR, the otherwise worthless FM counterpart to WKRC-AM, for bus passengers to take in all the joys of radio— and the commercials that went with it.

That last part, those ads, became a problem when the government ruled the agreement made riders a captive audience. Turns out, the audience was decidedly more captive than the dial position. As the busses moved, so did the signal, and rarely in tandem.

But by the mid-1960s when field effect transistors stabilized reception, FM growth was fairly quick. That FM allowed for better frequency response was only part of the competitive problem for AM stations. A big portion of a radio station's sound is derived from a variety of elements along the audio chain before it ever gets to a transmitter, AM or FM. And prior to the 1980s, it was open season on AM for tweakers hell-bent on a myriad of effects, from apparent loudness to acoustic depth. The results varied, but the horror was unmistakable on New Orleans' WNOE.

When Louisiana Governor Jimmy Noe bought WBNO in 1936 from the Baptists of New Orleans, and turned it into WNOE, there was a codicil. He would agree to run the Sunday night church services in perpetuity. All went reasonably well for about twenty years. In the 1950s, the station was quick to jump on the Top 40 bandwagon, since the Governor's son-in-law, Gordon McLendon, was one of the two most successful Top 40 radio station owners in the country. Noe's triumph would have been assured, except the other 'most successful Top 40 radio station owner,' Todd Storz, operated WTIX across town. It made for an interesting battle.

In a frenzy of one-upmanship, the two fought it out gimmick-for-gimmick. Some ploys were ineffective, but none were self-defeating until WNOE installed *Surround Sound*. It was little more than a tape loop producing reverb— an aural signature, which would become common on Top 40 stations in the 1960s.

WNOE's engineer carefully wired the control board so the reverb was heavy on all the music inputs, making the songs pop out of the radio, and light on anything having to

do with microphones, to keep the disc jockeys from sounding like stadium announcers. What he hadn't considered was the Sunday night sermon from the Baptists, the one that came in through a heavily reverberated channel reserved for music. As the volume was raised, it was eerily authentic. When *"god-God-GOD said-Said-SAID,"* it created a prob-lem-lem. The audience expected the minister to talk about the Lord. The broadcast mimicked the Lord talking about himself.

It was a lot easier for WNOE to remove reverb than it is for us to stop an emotional feedback loop, but being aware of the phenomenon will give you the edge. The next time you're mired in muck, take a breath and ask yourself if you're in immediate danger. Any answer other than an unqualified yes, is a signal to slow down to the moment.

While fear can create a loop, regret will assure it. Ruminating about how you could have acted differently lends itself to endless speculation. It commonly culminates in profound sorrow, which can be immobilizing, especially when someone else is goading you to places where you shouldn't go.

Some of the most debilitating examples come from passive/aggressive types. Such people can be delightful at a distance, but infuriating close up. These are the folks who incite you to riot, hitting every hot button they know you have, and then when you blow up, will innocently look at you wondering what's wrong, or why you're being so emotional. They stir the pot to frenzied boil, and then ask why the water's hot.

More subtle but equally insidious are masters of instilling guilt. Comics have built entire acts on them, often in the form of mom: *"Don't trouble yourself to change the light bulb darling, I'll just sit in the dark."* You'll find guilt-makers throughout society, though it appears to be an ingrained trait in controlling parents of all variety.

It's easy to rule a young child, but as the kid grows

up, it's increasingly futile. By adulthood, parent and child usually find common ground as independent individuals. In healthy families, mutual respect ensues.

But some parents view themselves as forever in charge, and will do what it takes to remain there. Realizing the greatly diminished effect that demands have on their now adult offspring, many discover the next best thing is to induce guilt. *"After all I've done for you, all I'm asking is…"* can be hard to turn down, even when all that's being asked is enough to choke a hippopotamus.

Guilt is toxic, but there is an antidote: logic. Take yourself out of the line of fire and answer this question: is this a reasonable request? Don't trust your first reply. Think about it as if you were an observer instead of a participant. How would you feel about someone else in the same situation that refused? Obviously it would be appropriate to get a ladder and change the light bulb for mom. But if she's asking you to rewire the entire house, regardless of how great she is at pouring the pity on you, it's probably overly excessive, unless you're an electrician.

Being intimately familiar with the details surrounding any guilt inducement, you're in a great position to analyze the legitimacy of the plea. If you dispassionately feel it is something you should do, then do it with gladness, no exceptions. This can be the hard part, because occasionally we won't want to do the things we know we should. But, to be at peace with saying no, you've got to know that you comply when it's appropriate.

If a particular request lives on the crazy side, politely decline. When further guilt-promoting comments follow, keep your rational reasons for refusal in mind, and sincerely explain that you're sorry you can't help. With every attempt that persists, continue to be brief, firm and polite. And when you find yourself feeling guilty, strongly remind yourself you gladly do what is reasonable, but this, whatever it is, is not.

It may be you'll never tame another's savage desire to control you. There can come a time when it's necessary to examine the suitability of keeping someone in your life. But before going there, you can take control away from anyone, by removing yourself from his, or her, ire. It's awfully hard to fight with someone who won't fight back.

That's universal advice, applying to any interaction on every level. You're always ahead of the game when you learn to act rather than react. It's easier for some of us, but there's an answer for all of us, next.

Chapter 11
The Advantage of Composure

My anger clouded my judgment
And I saw a red flash
Then my mouth wrote a check
That my heart couldn't cash
"Don't Be Sore At Me"
The Parliaments, 1967

Diplomacy is the art of telling a man to go to hell in such a way that he'll look forward to the journey, 19th Century British Prime Minister William Gladstone reputably said. Attribution is far and wide, but regardless of origin we all know folks who fit the description. From unctuous politicians to disingenuous co-workers, we don't buy what they're selling.

Radio is littered with examples. Take the general manager in Houston who insisted every employee greet any guest in the lobby by introducing themselves, shaking their hands, and welcoming them to the station— a demand that undoubtedly surprised a few folks, like the guy only there to fix the copy machine.

Even the intended targets had to wonder about being shown the required chicken bone and chisel on every desk. Though the specimens from the fast food chain were scrubbed clean, they seemed out of place, regardless of the oily explanation: Bone, as in the bone-deep beliefs behind the station's values. Chisel, a tool to scrape away the barnacles of old, to begin anew after each victory.

Assuming the best, it demonstrates a certain amount of flexibility. It's a more ironic dilemma if the entrenched beliefs are the barnacles in question. But either way, the whole notion doesn't engender a yearning for poultry. And it's downright nauseating to hear that before being hired, all those eager lobby-greeters were subjected to personality

tests graded by a psychologist.

But you've got to give it to the sincere folks who honestly live on planet pleasant where all the glasses are half-full. Michael O'Shea is one of them. We worked together in Los Angeles over 30 years ago and his natural knack of seeing the bright side was often a plus. Ray Smithers was the station's creative services ace. When it came to production, Ray was nothing short of inspired, but decidedly more direct than Michael when stating his case. His classic take on his frustration with O'Shea's approach was, '*You walk into a meeting, angry. Michael makes you feel better. You walk out, smiling. Later, you realize he didn't do anything about the problem. If I needed an amputation, he'd call it a limb rearrangement!*'

But for all Ray's angst, he had to admit O'Shea was a great boss. Michael's emotions, as the one liner goes, ran the gamut from A to B. His even-tempered nature put everyone at ease. It's a wonderful trait, but it's not transferable. The debate over whether your psychology is the result of nature or nurture will remain hot and heavy with wonderful anecdotal evidence on the side of genetics, from well-known research on twins separated at birth to groundbreaking studies of transplant recipients taking on the characteristics of their donors. Environmental proof is less plentiful, though sometimes irrefutable. But what's clear is regardless of what's responsible, the prospect that you'll change your psychological makeup is close to nil.

If you're blessed with an unflappable demeanor, the fallout is scarcely more than the occasional accusation you are not empathic to the matter at hand. And while you may be reticent to fight for what you need, at least you won't be doing damage control over what you said. That's never been my problem.

Distinct from Gladstone's diplomats who make you want to pack for the trip to hell they're selling, I've told so many idiots to screw themselves in so many ways that the

most dedicated to such pursuits might turn to celibacy. Those of my ilk are the ones who can't be taken anywhere, except back to apologize.

Though, if we could get a handle on our explosive nature, it might rob radio of some of its best performers. Chuck Riley comes to mind. Smart bosses, like George Johns, knew they couldn't control Riley and recognized why it wasn't a good idea. Certainly, there were days when a disgusted Riley would do a painfully poor show, but mainly, his disgruntled nature gave him the kind of world-view that put him on top. More often than not, he made people laugh, usually with him, but when at him, those moments were highly memorable. With inflection alone, Chuck created merriment. He'd use the legal station ID as the opportunity to inform his audience precisely how he felt. The mirth behind his impatience with equipment failures was evident when he referred to WIBC as, the "*SS Condemned.*"

It didn't help that Chuck drank to drown his demons, yet he never appeared inebriated on the air. That was a miracle, as evidenced by the station lawn. In winter, Riley saw the snow-covered grass to be the perfect cooler for his good friend, Johnny Walker. But after enjoying the contents of the bottle, it was hard to locate its exact position, an easily solved issue by Chuck who seemed to have a never-ending replacement supply. In truth, he probably drank very little in the studios, but you wouldn't know it by the amount of buried treasure, which accumulated one very snowy winter in the latter 1970s.

What Chuck hadn't counted on, that unseasonably warm March day, was a total melt. The first he heard of it was from the Indianapolis mayor, an ordained minister, who called to inquire if WIBC was the home of 50,000 watts or 50,000 winos. Even tremendously over-served, Riley had more talent than any of his competitors could have conjured, and in the last 25 years of his life he put it to use

doing voice-over announcements for products, broadcast outlets, and motion pictures everyone remembers. He'd drive associates crazy with his emotional outbursts, but it was undeniable that there was no one better at delivering the goods.

Chuck was so effective, particularly at interpreting trailers for horror movies, that when his oldest son Chad was a pre-teenager, he asked his dad for a professional favor: *'Please have mom do the telephone answering machine recording. You're scaring my friends.'*

But no one, including Riley, has duplicated the fateful performance in the winter of 1975 on Detroit's powerful blowtorch, CKLW, when Chuck McKay proved he had lost it. Based on his words, there was no doubt that this was a meltdown of major proportion.

A look at his resume would tell you McKay rose rapidly to stardom. By 19, he had amassed experience in a few top 10 markets on leading stations such as WLS in Chicago, and KFRC in San Francisco. He'd already been through CKLW three years earlier, doing a midday show and now he was back.

But a closer examination of McKay's track record revealed that as quickly as he came, he went. Being fired in radio is not a negative. Nearly every success story has a forced termination in its past, if for no other reasons than format changes, station sales or other events completely beyond a host's control. And as the assessment of a performance is subjective, what one boss hates, another one loves. But being fired a lot raises flags.

Before he was legally an adult, he had been around the country as Chuck McKay, Chuck Williams and Greg Austin. As the latter, he was axed in Boston and out of options when the program director of CKLW offered him the overnight job.

McKay assured management that he was grateful for the slot. He confirmed he understood his role would be

confined to maintaining the station's energetic format— no small feat in itself, to provide a lead-in to Gary Burbank's morning zaniness. While in its best execution, a jock's patter sounds like a natural performance springing forth from the music he plays, the reality is much different. Although some listeners have complained about announcers talking over records, it's not by accident that great jocks talk up to the post, the beat that precedes the start of a vocal. It takes practice and awareness, and to fellow professionals it's a train wreck when it's missed. Chuck McKay never missed.

His first three nights were terrific. But if there was any doubt it pained him to be in a position usually reserved for rookies, McKay's fourth night cleared that up. It also more than hinted at the mound of personal issues, which brought him to his multi-state pity party.

In disc jockey circles, tapes of the show are played so frequently it ranks as one of the most heard radio performances. It's impossible to experience without feeling embarrassed for McKay, but many radio denizens are equally surprised by the dichotomy. This man is having a full-blown breakdown, and he manages to do it while largely maintaining the station's stance, something not lost on him. As he reminded his audience, *"Despite the fact that they'll blow me out, I'm still gonna keep format. It's 3:08."*

For two hours he shared his utter despair, couched in the demeanor of being a *"superstar"* and a *"hot ticket."* Blaming his misfortunes on his mother's breastfeeding of him as a child, claiming to be a virgin, and repeatedly saying this show would get him fired, McKay never once missed the post. Talking over the Three Degrees' "When Will I See You Again," Chuck stopped at just the right moment: *"CKLW 3:18, I'll probably get canned after tonight but all I have to say is I love the people at the Big 8. I really do, man. We've got great people here from the general manager on down to the dumpster— and that's me."*

The first words his boss heard after McKay's engineer roused him from a sound sleep at 4 a.m. was, *"I do believe in God. I believe in Jesus, and I need his help right now."* Shortly after that request, terrestrial help escorted Chuck's inebriated self, right out the building.

Similar to most memorable emotional effusions, Chuck's megawatt outburst was a long time coming. The totality of his words displayed the depth of his pain. Multiple hurts are common among volatile people, but a virtual constant behind incendiary reactions is their common origin.

Other than the clinically disturbed, the majority who are prone to inordinate behavior in response to perceived injustices have one thing in common: their disappointment or irritation started much earlier. Rather than dealing with something when it is a small issue, they do nothing. Over time, the slights multiply and eventually culminate with an all-encompassing explosion.

Being able to step away from a situation at any point of contention to unemotionally analyze the facts is a tremendously helpful ability, but it's one that hot-blooded individuals don't possess. In radio, it's common knowledge that the most creative among us are often the most difficult to control. But more tellingly, such types are equally at a loss to control themselves.

Some feel that in tackling their nature they'll lose their "edge." Others don't recognize their role in their problems. A few are fully aware, and with the best intentions and total commitment, they've attempted to adopt a non-offensive, low-keyed approach, only to meet with total failure.

But that can all be in the past. There are seven words, which will forever change your life if you no longer want to be a slave to your emotional reactions. You can end the self-defeating cycle now, if you learn how to use the Magic 7…

I'll get back to you on that.

At the first hint of a hot reaction, censor whatever you planned to say and use the phrase that pays. It's fine to tailor it as you see fit, for instance, ending a phone conversation with, *"I'd like to discuss that, but I've got to go now because the kitchen's on fire,"* as long as the idea is intact and you utter it before you begin to formulate a reply to anything that isn't exactly as you'd wish it to be.

Assuming the kitchen fire isn't effective enough to stop the other party from pressing the issue, feel free to reiterate, *"No really, I've got to go right now. The pots are melting, but I promise I'll get back to you soon. Please forgive me."* Anyone unwilling to hang up isn't worth your ire, anyway.

In fact, nobody that enrages you is worth your energy. If you're going to unload on someone, your feelings about them or their actions are not remotely positive. Why would you give your personal power to someone who could not possibly deserve it? The reason that the old line about matrimony, *'Next time instead of getting divorced, I'll just find someone I hate and buy them a house,'* is funny, is because no one in their right mind would bestow their nemeses with their riches, but by comparison it's better than the tedious and painful dissolution process.

Many of us realize the paradox— by losing our cool, we hand control of ourselves to someone we'd never want to have it. We do it because we are not acting in our own best interest at that moment. We're reacting to outside stimuli, which we do not appreciate. It's automatic and unconscious, and the best way to stop it is by giving yourself your own reset button. That's what those seven words do.

Likewise, when you get written notice, emails, letters, and so forth, no matter how much you want to respond, don't— not even positively. Read it over and do nothing, at

least not right away. You can reply later, but if you're an over-reactor, it's against your nature. Your urge to retort will vary inversely to your comfort with what you're facing.

Laughable validation of that comes from a national nighttime talk show host who rarely answers emailed compliments but immediately reacts to criticism— and alarmingly, quite publicly to online putdowns. Don't follow his lead. He's a blathering moron. It might help to think of someone similar. Any loose cannon you don't respect will suffice. Negative role models can help you by showing you what you don't want to do.

That's not to suggest there aren't times to forcefully stand your ground. But your satisfaction with the results will be strongly correlated with whether you acted in your own interest or reacted to your detriment. In general, when you're originating a thought, you'll position it so that others will be apt to embrace it. The opposite is true when you're responding.

At best, you defeat yourself when you react to others. In the worst confrontations, your opponent knows exactly what they're doing when they pull your strings. Stop being their pawn. Use the Magic 7 words.

A hilarious example of someone who didn't heed that advice occurred in 1972 on Dallas' KLIF, the former flagship of Gordon McLendon's radio empire.

Gordon, who sold the station to Fairchild Industries in the early '70s, was a promotional genius able to hype the most pedestrian elements of radio programming. Newscasts were no exception, resplendent with sounders and reverb, though McLendon was far from alone in hyping coverage. For a while, competitor KXOL in Ft. Worth had more newsmen than disc jocks. But Gordon had more money than God, or so it seemed. Having the first mobile news van complete with rotating headlines, a la the Goodyear Blimp, was only a prop in McLendon's quest to be first on the scene.

All went well as his land-blimp cruised up and down the Central Expressway, a visible reminder that KLIF was, indeed, first on any scene, until that fateful day in the early 1960s, when Gordon was listening to his direct rival, KBOX, and heard an item that KLIF didn't have. More unforgivingly, it was about a personal friend involved in an accident, and it happened on the same Expressway used by his illuminated news-mobile.

The staff meeting was brief and to the point. It, too, was comprised of seven words, but instead of a calm rendition of *"I'll get back to you on that,"* smoke poured from McLendon's ears as he said: *"Gentlemen, this had better never happen again."*

After the station's sale, public affairs programming on KLIF continued to be done with flair, though assuredly there are better words to describe Rod Roddy's job-ending performance. Roddy would go on to a remarkable voice-over career in Los Angeles, most notably in 1986, replacing Johnny Olsen as the announcer for *The Price Is Right*. Until his untimely death from cancer in 2003, Rod put his emotionally excitable manner to its perfect use every day when he shouted, *"Come on down!"*

Back in 1972, it was closer to, *'Get out of my studio!'* The hallmark of public affairs programming, then a license requirement by the FCC, was its mind-numbing blandness. Roddy was charged with making it interesting. It's an understatement to say he did. Listeners were morally outraged the night he stripped naked on the air to protest the lack of sex education in public schools, yet anyone who cared to drive by KLIF's much-touted second-floor triangular glass studios on Commerce Street would have seen it was pure imagination.

Had Roddy checked with Michael O'Shea, he would have anticipated the outcry. In 1970, Michael was elevated to KLIF's program director. His calmness was perfect for navigating listener complaints including, on one occasion,

an entire church group in the general manager's office outraged at the midday talk show KLIF was doing. It was a slightly risqué program, akin to Bill Ballance's *Feminine Forum,* which was doing well in Los Angeles at the time.

So here's Michael, patiently listening to comparisons of him to Satan, and accusations of being the Devil's right hand man. After the group wound down, Michael softly interjected, '*But ladies, what we're saying on the radio is nothing worse than your ten year old child would read on the bathroom wall.'* His pride in his speedy deflection lasted until one of the women sniffed, *"Mr. O'Shea are you comparing your radio station to a bathroom wall?!"*

Roddy did not share any of O'Shea's tact. Had he been in the room, one shudders to think what he would have said. Given his final show, it wouldn't have been good. Being gay and liberal, he didn't have much patience for convention. But that's why he agreed to have Vonda Kay Van Dyke on the air. Vonda, a Miss America from the previous decade, was married to a preacher, and was representing Amway. It wasn't going to get better than that. Roddy could take her to task on traditional female roles, how Miss America demeaned women, and then could extol the virtues of the feminist movement. He was ready. Or so he thought.

Rod clearly understood the parameters. While he was after the social issues, he knew Vonda would recoil at the notion, and in any case, would mostly want to promote Amway. She was in town for Amway's national convention at the Blackstone Hotel in Fort Worth. No doubt, she wanted to look good to those who were paying her a bundle to represent them.

None of this was lost on Roddy. He saw it as a potential powder keg pairing and he took great pains to do an elaborate on-air introduction that not only put Vonda in a great light, but also extensively sung the virtues of Amway. After sufficient lauding, Roddy set the ground

rules: though Vonda was in town for Amway, a fine company, there would be no further mention of them during the interview. It was quite the generous set up. And you can guess what happened. Or maybe you can't.

Roddy asked a question. Vonda managed to get Amway into the answer. Roddy politely reminded her of the ground rules, and ventured another. Vonda worked in Amway. Roddy amicably restated the terms, and posed a further question. Vonda included Amway. Roddy flatly reminded her again, and moved on to another query. Vonda likened it to Amway. Roddy tersely reminded her of the deal, but within a few minutes, it was conclusive that Amway was the answer to any question ever pondered on the planet.

After a few more volleys, Roddy finally had his fill. *'That's it!'* he yelled. *'That's the last time you're going to mention that product on the air because I'm going to ask you to leave the studio now.'* Apparently no one asks Miss America to leave. She went crazy. With a hot cup of coffee in her hand, she stood up, turned to go, and threw it in his face.

Roddy screeched to the effect of, *'You slob! Get out of my studio. Ladies and gentlemen, Miss America is nothing but a street slob,'* at which point listeners heard his gasp for breath and the thud he made by hitting the table as he fell to the floor, having passed out cold.

Ambulances were lined up at the door to administer aid, but it turned out that Rod only hyperventilated. He returned to the program within an hour, angry. By this time, it's approaching midnight but Rod was just getting started. Going on about how nobody had ever treated him with that level of disrespect, he suggested that his listeners let Amway know the caliber of person who was representing them. Roddy gave out the number for the Blackstone Hotel and the room number of Amway's president. He added Vonda's room number too, for those who wanted to give her

a piece of their mind, directly. It was a mixed blessing Rod had a huge audience, many of whom obliged his request. The FCC mandates that stations serve the public interest. This is not the same as serving the interested public. Roddy had to go.

But even those of us perpetually living on the placid side of life can be overwhelmed when too much is happening at once. If you're at a point where you've got multiple responsibilities, or competing urgent demands, with no time to do them and not a clue about what to do, you're an emotional meltdown waiting to happen. The loss of control is disturbing and disorienting. Whether it's an acute or ongoing crisis, if you don't get a handle on it, the outcome will not be in your favor.

If life is overwhelming, make a list of every thing you must accomplish. Doing that alone will be stabilizing. Don't analyze anything by thinking about how long or difficult or impossible it might seem. Prioritize events so that time-sensitive chores are chronologically at the top. That's it. Then work the list, one task at a time.

Now here's the secret: once you've made your lists, never look at the whole picture. If you immerse yourself in the totality of it all, you'll be immobilized. Like the old saying, *'How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time,'*— all that's relevant is what's in front of you, and that's only one thing.

Beyond grossly minimizing your effectiveness, emotional over-the-top reactions take a tremendous toll, including major physical implications. The term "hot reactor" was coined by a cardiologist, Dr. Robert Elliot, several decades ago to identify patients whose physiology put them in grave danger when encountering stressful situations.

Rod Roddy's hyperventilated black out would appear to be the classic case, but what Dr. Elliot's work proved was that hot reactors tend to exhibit no outward manifestation.

The calm and collected are as prone, if not more so, to be at risk. Dr. Elliot showed that for many hot reactors, the physical reaction is immediate, prolonged, and most interestingly, not felt on any level. It's more apt to manifest as long-term heart disease than sudden death.

While there are tests to determine whether you are unknowingly a hot reactor, and various modalities to deal with the chronic ailments that result, those of us who are quick to tell someone to do something anatomically impossible when we are upset are all too well aware what's going on. The rush of adrenaline, a hold over from ancient times when we needed to run from bigger menacing animals, is instantaneous and unmistakable. It won't kill us, though if we act on it in anger, it will kill our chances for getting what we want. But as our ancestors used it to their benefit, so can we. Rather than a prompt to run, now the feeling can be your sign to stop and use the Magic 7: *I'll get back to you on that.*

Our fight or flight response is obvious, if not to others, definitely to us. But the greatest damage from our tumultuous nature is hidden, even from us. It's how badly it skews the best analyzing tool we've got: our perspective.

Chapter 12
The Importance Of Perspective – Part One
Looking Back

Alan Freed died a bitter, broken man in 1965. He was tortured that he, the man responsible for coining the term "rock and roll," was cast aside by ABC— while Dick Clark was protected and exonerated. Freed never made peace with that dichotomy. Why not him? Was it that Dick was a fresh-faced, clean-scrubbed, all-American male; while he, "The Moondog," was a rough around the edges, ethnic looking guy who lost his New York television show when Frankie Lymon danced with a white girl? In trying to make sense out of that contrast, he ate himself alive and drank himself to death.

"Rock and roll," was hardly new to African Americans as a figure of speech. They'd long used it as a euphemism for making love. But after hearing the words in the chorus of *"60 Minute Man,"* an appropriate setting given that the song extolled the virtues of "Lovin' Dan" who could miraculously spend 60 minutes in the tawdry act, Freed appropriated the phrase for the music he played.

After success on WJW in Cleveland, Alan made it to New York's WINS. His concerts were sold out and more, his ratings were solid, his movies were box office hits, his connections were many… well, perhaps too many. But Freed was a piker in that department compared to Dick Clark. It would take a poster-sized, intricate diagram during the payola hearings to connect Clark to the numerous companies in which he had a financial interest. So, how the hell could Dick get an apology from the US Congress, while he, Alan Freed, got an indictment from the district attorney of New York City?

If Freed died of a broken heart, as some would later claim, his lack of perspective was a major contributing

factor. When the subject of perspective comes up, it's generally treated as a Pollyannaish discussion of whether the proverbial glass is "half-empty or half-full." Certainly, "perspective" is your ability to assess and weigh the circumstances in your life, but "ability" is more than your willingness to see things in their proper light. Your perspective is based on the information you have. Often misperception comes down to ignorance. You can't weigh the evidence if it isn't in front of you. That was Freed's problem and, of course, he didn't know it.

When Alan asked, *"Why?"* about the exoneration of Dick Clark, it was the rhetorical cry of the damned. He knew precisely what was happening throughout the payola witch-hunt, though as to how he was treated by ABC compared to Clark, he was less clear. Had Freed been privy to all the raw facts, he would have understood why.

Even without Freed, the payola hearings were loaded with misperceptions. That's why there were no federal charges arising from the circus-like interrogations in the House of Representatives. What these Congressmen were actually investigating was rock and roll. Those who played it were almost secondary. Middle-aged adults were outraged at this teenage-menace music. If it didn't directly lead to juvenile delinquency, it surely was blurring the lines of segregation. It had to go.

No wonder Todd Storz felt he needed to do something to uplift the image of the disc jockeys on his rock and roll stations. After instituting codes of dress and behavior, he decided to hold national conventions to show off their virtues. The first one, in 1958, went quite well. Held in Kansas City, this immersion into acceptability was attended by announcers, program directors, managers, owners, civic leaders, politicians, and Mitch Miller.

Miller, the enormously popular old-line musician who also headed CBS records, was the new music's most vocal critic. Awash in wishful thinking, Miller's keynote

address proclaimed rock and roll was dead. This was welcome news to some of the attendees who managed rock and roll stations and couldn't manage to sell many commercials. Even when a station was #1, venerable local advertisers avoided associating themselves with *that* music. If rock and roll was dead, it solved a lot of problems, so upon Miller's proclamation, a couple of broadcasters went home and changed formats.

Apart from that glitch, Storz was delighted with the results, and immediately began to plan the next year's confab. It would be held at the Americana Hotel, in posh Bal Harbour, Florida. He was determined to make it the event of the decade. It would be more.

Stories about the *"Second Annual Radio Programming Seminar and Pop Music Disc Jockey Convention"* are numerous. Most revolve around its bacchanalian bent. All end with the *Miami Herald* coverage, which appeared at the close of the meeting, held over Memorial Day weekend, in 1959. The headline of the front-page story proclaimed: *"Booze Broads & Bribes,"* in type size usually reserved for *"World War 2 is Over."* Contrary to what occurred, and the organizers' assertions that it didn't, the article downplayed it. This was the party of the era.

Major pop music artists performed. Count Basie and Peggy Lee recorded live albums late at night. Every record company attended and brought every manner of cutely disguised bribe to entice announcers of every level of fame. RCA gave out play money, redeemable for real merchandise. ABC Paramount provided free cab rides to anywhere. But Roulette's Morris Levy was the ringleader. Never one to be burdened by laws or regulations, and always one to capitalize on opportunity, whether he truly did fly every hooker on the east coast to the meeting, as some said after the fact, is irrelevant. No one doubted he had.

As with the prior year's event, civic and political luminaries addressed the crowd. That's where things went

wrong. Almost every chronicle from then until now will state that the *"Booze, Broads & Bribes"* article led to the payola hearings. It didn't, at least not entirely.

While the Storz meet was taking place near Miami Beach, the House Subcommittee of Legislative Oversight, headed by Arkansas democrat Oren Harris, was a thousand miles away in Washington investigating television's quiz shows. Mitch Miller told members of the Committee, and anyone who would listen, that their next target should be disc jockeys. Miller firmly believed the only way these announcers would willingly play this dreadful music was if they were paid to do it. To him, the playing of rock and roll over pop standard mainstays was de facto evidence of payola. His sentiments, backed up by a handful of powerful music industry old-timers and practically the entire staff of ASCAP, resonated with the nine, white, middle-aged men on the Committee.

But Miller's assertions and the Committee's aversions alone wouldn't spark much activity on Capitol Hill. Even the *Miami Herald* piece didn't fully tip the scales. It sharply raised a collective eyebrow, but more than anything, the capper was probably the irate call from Frank Clement, the governor of Tennessee.

In 1956, Clement had been the keynoter of the Democratic Convention in Chicago. The bombastic speaker, sometimes known as "Give 'em hell-fire Clement," brought his wife, Lucille, to the meeting. She stole the show. Though in her mid-30s and a mother of three, Lucille was a stunner. Delegates might have had polarized opinions about candidates and issues, but nearly all in attendance felt Lucille was the best looking dame there. She got quite a bit of coverage on her own, including an impromptu fashion show for a Hearst photographer.

Three years later, Clement was the biggest political name slated to speak at the Storz convention. He brought Lucille. It's doubtful the couple fully realized the tone of

the event they were attending. It's inconceivable they knew that Levy had rounded up all those hookers. It's a given they did not share the disc jockeys' knowledge that the ladies of the evening could be easily recognized by the green dresses they wore. It was hardly a uniform. All the girls had to do was wear the gown of their choice, as long as it was telltale green. It was a pretty popular color that year. One that many style-conscious women might favor.

You know what's coming next, don't you? Gov. Clement was escorting his ever lovely, fashion-plate wife through the hotel lobby on their way to dinner. Lucille was draped in a beautiful, but undeniably green, dress. The rest, as they say, is history. Or in this instance, the fondle-fest was lost to history. Through the years, none of the public accounts of that infamous meet— be they first-hand, secondary or tertiary, include a word about Mrs. Clement's role in precipitating the payola hearings. All the credit goes to a freelance writer for a local paper.

Alan Freed was not involved with any of the convention high jinks. But six months later, when the Harris Committee announced they'd turn their attention to payola after wrapping up the quiz show hearings, Freed's flamboyant association with rock and roll, and his knack for headline grabbing with such havoc as his over-packed performances devolving into mini-riots, made him a prime person of interest.

The Committee members were sure they had the goods on Freed and Dick Clark, in addition to hundreds of local air talents. They had investigators, attorneys, studies, flow charts, and about a thousand pounds of what they thought was evidence. What they didn't have was any perspective on how the industry worked, or what they needed to show to prove their accusations. Their frustration made for wonderful news copy.

"Payola" is an industry specific term. Legally, it's commercial bribery. To substantiate the charges, the

Committee would have to uncover evidence that someone, ostensibly a disc jockey, solicited money or its equivalent in exchange for doing something, in this case, playing a rock and roll record. As the hearings went on, it should have become inescapable that they wouldn't be able to do it.

For two divergent reasons, it was impossible for the Committee to show a quid pro quo. Though it's undeniable that many people along the Top 40 food chain enriched themselves while providing a service to their grateful audience, it was seldom a blatant, 'give me fifty bucks and I'll play that Boyd Bennett song.' But when it was, in order to uncover the facts, one of the participants would have had to be willing to squawk.

And that would have been suicidal, particularly if Dick Clark was mentioned. Besides, it never would have happened, unless one of the parties involved in the deal had been dissatisfied. With payola, everyone was a winner.

There's a worthy argument that there was a loser in the equation: the artists. But the prevailing attitude was these kids should be grateful for their recording fame. In addition to seeing the country in style, they could make more money for their rock and roll performances, and have a better shot with the opposite sex. To the record company owners, the idea that these mostly-teenagers should get royalties at all was debatable, much less whether giving a portion of the proceeds away in a payola deal, was a problem.

The bottom line was these predominantly small-time businessmen stood to make a lot of money if their records were hits, and they were willing to provide financial incentive to the hit-makers. No different than paying a sales commission, it was simply a part of doing business. Concerning Dick Clark, these entrepreneurs were falling all over themselves to further his interests. Clark had something that nobody else possessed at the time—national exposure. Especially for independent record

companies, a tune exposed on *American Bandstand* was found gold.

The issue with these smaller firms was distribution. They'd cobble together a network of local distributors to sell their product. Separate from payment questions was a timing problem. To have a #1 record, it's got to be a hit simultaneously throughout the country. But local distributors were not in the business of coordinating their promotion efforts with counterparts in other regions.

The result was often a rolling hit. A song might be big in Buffalo, followed by Pittsburgh, then Dallas, and so forth. That would keep a tune on the charts for a protracted period of time, but never in any given week would there be a sales tally sufficient to push it to the top. *American Bandstand* solved that problem. When kids in every city liked a record they heard on Bandstand, they all wanted to buy it, at once.

But that fertile ground for abuse and the unprecedented daytime success *American Bandstand* enjoyed, had absolutely nothing to do with why ABC protected Dick Clark, and skewered Alan Freed.

The head of ABC was Leonard H. Goldenson, a man greatly relieved that his network was not involved in the quiz show scandals plaguing CBS and NBC. His relief was short lived. ABC may not have aired any questionable quiz shows, but unbeknownst to Goldenson, his network's liability in the payola probe was huge. Whether he fully grasped that ABC was a company in the unique position of not only paying payola, but paying it to their own employees through their record subsidiary Am-Par and its publishing arm, Pamco, is debatable. That startling fact came up during the hearings, but it seems the Committeemen were so overwhelmed by their lack of understanding about what they were investigating, that they missed it. Freed knew all about it. Both he and Clark had been direct beneficiaries.

But there was something Freed probably did not know. And when Goldenson uncovered it, he was livid, frightened, and pragmatic. In the blink of an eye, Goldenson had no choice but to fully defend Dick Clark, because all of ABC's broadcast properties were riding on it. Alternately, he was fully willing to hang Dick Clark, if he felt the network's fate would be better served by that play. His only loyalty was to keeping ABC out of, arguably, the biggest mess in which it ever found itself.

Paradoxically, prior to 1960, the Communications Act was silent on the matter of broadcast station employees engaging in prohibited acts, though it left no question as to what would happen if a licensee did so. For payola and plugola, the FCC rules dictate that whenever a license holder receives payment for anything aired on their station, it must be disclosed. It's not that a licensee can't take consideration to play a record, but if he does, he must unambiguously state it. The two or three minutes while the record airs are to be treated as commercial inventory. Similarly, a licensee can plug a sponsor's product, though it should be obvious to the audience that it's a commercial and properly logged as such.

To distill somewhat cloudy waters, if a sponsor pays a broadcast licensee for mentions on the air, and the arrangement is not readily perceptible to the typical listener or viewer, the licensee must explain it. For instance, you'll hear disclosures at the end of quiz shows, on the order of *"Prizes provided by…"*

It's perfectly fine to say, "*Travel provided by American Airlines*," if it is. But if American Airlines pays you a flat fee annually for a plug on each show and doesn't care what you do with the money, the *"Travel provided by"* mention would violate FCC rules because it's misleading. The FCC penalties for disguised commercials include license revocation.

The foregoing is not a fictitious example. It's

precisely what occurred with *The Dick Clark Show*, which aired live on Saturday nights from New York. The half-hour program commenced in February 1958, and was the direct result of ABC trying to further capitalize on the popularity of *American Bandstand.* But the network was oblivious to the reasons kids watched. A blessedly brief Monday night attempt with Clark proved their utter stupidity about the tastes of teens.

For this new show, ABC relented and allowed Dick and his crew to control everything. A partnership was struck and Clark formed a new company, *Drexel Television,* to produce it. ABC was a partial owner. When Goldenson was briefed on what transpired, it's virtually a given he realized that the handling of the American Airlines mentions fit the classic definition of plugola.

In a furious attempt to make ABC appear clean, top to bottom, Goldenson was willing to do whatever it took to distance his network from the activities of the rock and roll denizens populating its stations. Among the defensive tactics was the drafting of a holier-than-thou document to be signed by ABC employees, clearly stating they never took payola. Alan Freed went ballistic.

Beyond insulting, it was the height of hypocrisy. Freed remembered well, an ABC attorney's comment to him upon his leaving New York's WINS to join WABC*, 'Now that you're with the company, I trust you'll rely more heavily on ABC Paramount product.'* And he was incensed that a different declaration would be laboriously crafted for Clark to safely sign, while he was expected to perjure himself or be fired.

Had Freed understood all the facts, his focus may have gone from why Clark was treated so preferentially, to what ABC was trying to hide. It was not the highly biased personal attack he believed it to be. It was an impartial, unemotional business decision, limited to how best to expediently handle corporate damage control.

That knowledge wouldn't have changed Freed's reality. By any yardstick, in the process of protecting itself, ABC made Alan Freed its scapegoat-in-chief, a position that ultimately proved fatal to him. But a different perspective as to why it happened might have let him sleep better at night.

Freed would later plead guilty to commercial bribery in New York City. Talk of the charges predated the House investigation, but he wouldn't be held accountable until long after the hearings had ended. In answer to why Freed and not Clark, the prosecutor was pragmatic: he didn't have jurisdiction over Clark who lived in Philadelphia. It's highly probable Freed could have beaten the New York rap, but by then, he was depressed and defeated. He chose to take a plea.

But nothing serves as a greater illustration of misplaced perceptions than the payola investigation itself. When the hearings opened, Oren Harris and his fellow Committee members were staring at what they thought was mounting evidence confirming the duplicity of disc jockeys. Much of it pointed to the sheer ingenuity of Dick Clark. Harris realized his investigators needed more time to piece together the full extent of Clark's nefarious activities, so his testimony was slated to be last. Long before they got to him, it should have collectively dawned on the Committee members that they were in deep trouble.

Apart from being difficult to prove, the Committee's initial premise, that jocks spun the records they were paid to play, was largely incorrect. It was true that prior to the payola hearings, air talents had great leeway in choosing what songs they wanted to air, but it was also true that a radio announcer's persona was directly linked to his musical choices.

Undeniably, these guys were in a position to play for pay, and indisputably they did it, though only a fool would have done it exclusively. A disc jockey had too much riding on playing what his audience wanted to hear. Therefore it

was at least equally probable that money would exchange hands after the fact, as a thank you rather than a bribe. Overall it was a gray area, which the Committee was ineffectively trying to turn black and white.

By the time Clark took the stand, the interrogators were positively befuddled, but hell-bent on hanging the host of *American Bandstand.* After noticing how many songs were published by one of Dick Clark's companies, Rep. Steve Derounian mused, "*You say you did not get any payola but you got an awful lot of royola.*" Derounian listed 33 music industry related businesses in which Clark had a financial interest, and Clark steadfastly maintained that none of them were set up to pay him off, because he had never agreed to play a record for money.

The effort's legal counsel, Robert Lishman, dove on the word "agreed," noting that in the testimonies of the multitude of disc jockeys before him, no one had ever stated that they "agreed" to anything. "*It is always some kind of a telepathic understanding that if everything is going good, in appreciation for what they are doing, somehow miraculously they get their money.*" Little did he know that his sarcastic comment pretty well summed up the deal.

Rep. John Moss was equally off base. When he said, "*A very unique thing about this industry is all this brotherly love. People just cannot restrain themselves from giving away their wealth*," he revealed not only his contempt, but also the depth of his misunderstanding. On one thing, however, he was quite clear: something was up with what went down, on the Saturday night show.

In one of the most amazing perception missteps, Moss was so focused on Clark's wrongdoing, he apparently failed to realize he was holding a license violation in his hand. He zeroed in on Clark's Drexel Television as being part of an agreement that specifically included ABC, but when Clark deflected his questions about American Airlines by explaining the mentions were not commercials, they

were promotional announcements; Moss was thrown off course.

Maybe it was the Congressman's anger with Clark that saved ABC from scrutiny. Maybe it was Goldenson's lucky day. In place of Moss taking Clark down the road of dismantling the ties that bound ABC to the Saturday night show and what it meant for their licenses, Moss replied, "*I can call it Clarkola if I want to.*" His disgust with Clark's semantic attempt to dismiss the charges, trumped his interest in ABC's complicity.

By all accounts, Clark's first day of testimony, the last Friday in April 1960, unnerved him. He attempted to dance his way through hours of highly damning evidence, and much more was planned for the following Monday. He had every reason to be concerned. But what happened when the questioning resumed, surprised more than Clark.

Hapless as the Committee members may have been, it's hard to imagine they could have turned a review of a startling amount of potentially explosive connections tied directly to Dick Clark, into a boring exercise. But they did. Monday came to a close with most onlookers expecting that Chairman Harris would hold Clark over for another day of grilling. Instead, Harris released Clark, and darn near apologized to him, referring to him as *'a fine young man who was not the architect of the system but a product of it.'*

Dick was relieved, but many of the men who labored intensively for months to unmask him were furious. Ed Jones, a Committee investigator, was stunned to learn that the reams of material he carefully compiled showing the full extent of Clark's abominations would never be broached. Shortly after the hearings concluded, he transferred to the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

In the ensuing decades, lingering questions remained. All centered on some version of, 'What the hell happened?' By now, you know the answer. Harris and his team had a perception problem. They were so driven to find

evidence of payola transpiring, and so bowled over by the alarming extent of what they found, that they failed to realize all they had was proof of assets. And assets themselves don't prove anything. To show the gains were ill gotten, they needed the smoking gun— the quid pro quo, and they weren't going to get it.

It's improbable, as Freed and others contended, that Harris was beguiled by Clark's boyish, good looks, and inviting, clean-cut image, much different from the rock and roll the Committee despised; than it was that during that fateful Monday, Harris quietly resigned himself to the reality he couldn't make his case.

Positively, there were people, and with Clark, a seemingly endless list of them, who could have given the Committee everything it needed and more. Some of them may have been dissatisfied enough to think of doing it. But when it came to having a hit record, Harris eventually had to grasp that Clark was too powerful to cross.

So the Committee wasn't going to hear about Dick's demands. Though off the record, so to speak, artists compared notes about how Clark insisted on publishing rights, or what happened to performers such as Charlie Gracie, who would never again appear on *American Bandstand* after having the gumption to demand his royalty payments from a label to which Dick was tied. And company owners swapped stories about how they were coerced into having their records pressed at a plant in which Clark had an interest, or distributed by a company he partially owned.

At one point, the Committee thought they were on to something big when they discovered irrefutable proof that artists appearing on *American Bandstand* had to sign their royalty checks over to Clark. But even there, they failed to take into consideration that the despicable activity was documented in a corporate setting. It was hard to argue criminality with an accounting ledger, showing the

consignment of payments as an offset of the program's production expenses. The show grossed millions, but being greedy is not against the law.

When it was all over, beyond an amendment to the FCC regulations requiring broadcast station personnel to adhere to the same payola and plugola restrictions as licensees, it's commonly thought that nothing else came from those hearings— but that too is wrong.

The biggest change since the payola investigation is how radio stations sound. While consistency was critical to the success of Top 40, prior to 1960, there were few restrictions on how each disc jockey would select his own music. All of it would be from the same basic genre but tempo and flow would differ, as would reliance on personal favorites. To an extent, if six full-time announcers were heard on a station, it was almost as if it was one frequency with six formats closely resembling each other.

The most widespread radio reaction to the hearings was to have the station's program director select all the records his air staff could play. The industry joke, that now you only had to pay one person to get your records on the radio, went far to show payola wasn't fully dead. But apart from whatever went into the programmer's choice, the result was a much more uniform sound. That alone proves something else did come from the hearings, and amazingly, for the commercial success of Top 40 formatted radio stations, that something was good.

Dick Clark never stopped blaming the Committee for whatever was handy, from harm to his reputation to the loss of potentially billions of dollars by ABC's forcing him to divest his interest in all outside companies. But his success belied any lasting damage. It also belied the origins of *American Bandstand.*

Although Clark isn't quick to correct the misperception, he was hardly the original host of the show. That distinction belongs to Bob Horn, a guy similar in most

ways to Alan Freed. But while Freed's later frustration came from what he didn't know, Horn knew it all. Assuming he was absolutely right, that at the height of his popularity, he was intentionally set up and brought down, his problem came from a gross misperception on what to do about it.

Chapter 13
The Importance of Perspective – Part Two
Going Forward

When Bob Adams died in Houston in 1966, associates thought it was the all too early passing of a creative advertising man, at only 50 years old. After a brief stint as a disc jockey on KILT, Bob moved to the sales department where his knack for promotion was evident. It's said he was the first guy to come up with the concept of *"Midnight Madness"* sales. Whether it was original or not, his ability to draw large crowds late at night to otherwise uninteresting venues, should have been a clue to his past.

But very few in Houston had a hint that the Bob Adams they knew, and the guy who created what would become *American Bandstand,* were one in the same. Even if they heard his former name, Bob Horn, it's doubtful they would have made the connection. Dick Clark saw to that.

Aside from a scant mention in a few of his books, Clark felt no need to set the record straight. To the contrary, when interviewed for this, or that, anniversary of *American Bandstand,* which always added up to the year Horn created the show; Clark's reply to the obvious question, *'What was the first song you played?'* was invariable. The master of deflection had a standard line: *'I don't remember what it was back in 1952, but in 1957 when the show went national, it was "Whole Lotta Shakin'" by Jerry Lee Lewis.'* Ironically, Clark was no more generous to Lewis when the singer's scandals broke, than he was to Horn.

The first record played on *Bob Horn's WFIL-TV Bandstand* in October 1952, is lost to history. It's sad, but on some level, almost understandable that Clark would allow the man who played it to be lost along with it. If Dick possessed a less selfish nature, perhaps it would have

occurred to him that a screen credit at the end of all those anniversary specials, to honor the creator and originator of the show on which Clark's entire empire was built, might be appropriate. But by the time Bandstand went national, few in Philadelphia had any sympathy for Horn, and fewer still had any idea what really happened.

In the early years of television, daytime network programming was sparse, and sometimes non-existent. In filling the hours before dark, affiliates were left to their own instincts. Like the networks serving them at night, the easiest call for local stations in the day was to borrow from what worked for radio. One thing working well in Philly was Bob Horn.

Bob was enjoying a lot of success on WFIL radio with the evening show he dubbed "Bandstand." It was not lost on him when he chose to join the AM outlet, that there was a television station in the building. Nor was it lost on management to think of putting a radio show on TV. But beyond that, those in charge had few ideas about what would work, and none of them were good.

Whether Horn would succeed was not WFIL-TV's initial concern. Management focused on using the show as a repository for programming they'd previously acquired— a library of questionably entertaining short musical films. Unquestionably, they were downright awful. Aside from that weakness, MTV can eat its heart out. Bob Horn was doing their act 30 years before them— at least for a month.

A healthy part of Bob's radio triumph came from his obvious love for the records he played, which, in addition to pop standards at the turn of the decade, began to include rhythm and blues. But every video clip he was forced to feature belied the depth of his relationship with anything people wanted to hear. That the music was so bad turned out to be a blessing. It gave Horn the leverage he needed to change the show soon after its debut.

Impressed with what he had recently seen at a soda

shop— kids leaving their tables and dancing in the aisles when a song they liked came on the loud speakers, and long aware of the popularity of his own sock hops; the answer to his format was unmistakable: a televised teen dance. *Bob Horn's WFIL-TV Bandstand* was born.

The two-hour show, seen weekdays from 3 to 5, was an instantly hit. The next few years would be a whirlwind for Horn. Miraculously, he was able to navigate the musical chasm that engulfed many others. Rarely could a disc jockey make the move from appealing to the aficionados of pop standards, to satisfying the ravenous fans of rock and roll. Confounding management, Horn did it without a missing a beat.

As the new music continued to consume American youth, shows akin to Horn's cropped up along the eastern seaboard. Eventually they'd come to the attention of ABC. With no heritage daytime programming, a daily teenage dance show would be appealing to the network.

The first obstacle ABC encountered was the expense of doing such a show in New York. Union commitments alone made it seem prohibitive. Equally vexing, network management had no experience with rock and roll. But both issues could easily be solved if they picked up an existing program. Arguably, Philadelphia was a strong first choice for two reasons:

WFIL-TV, which owned the show, was close to New York. ABC honchos could easily make the commute when necessary. But probably of more of interest, the publisher of *TV Guide* owned the station. (Shortly after Bandstand debuted on Channel 6, against the advice of those in his circle who couldn't see why anyone would need a list of television programs, media kingpin Walter Annenberg debuted the wildly successful *TV Guide*, adding it to his radio and television holdings including WFIL-AM-FM-TV and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.)

The thought of partnering with the company that

controlled the most influential television-viewing magazine in America had to be irresistible to any television network, but would ABC have been interested if Bob Horn remained as host? Horn's huge following of fans adored him because he was a kindred spirit in the music he played. But would that be lost on the network, the same way it seemingly was on WFIL-TV management who viewed him as too old, too ugly, too far from the image America wanted? Bob believed it was entirely possible. He knew too well that the higher ups saw him, at best, as an unlikely star, but it was a moot point. He had a contract.

In the summer of 1956, Bob Horn was arrested for drunk driving. WFIL-TV removed him from Bandstand. That's when Bob began to believe he was being railroaded. His arrest was a specious charge that would ultimately be unfounded, and he knew it. But he also knew his contract had a moral turpitude clause, which invalidated the agreement should he do anything that could cast the station in a negative light. It was impossible to dissuade him from feeling the timing was too convenient.

Refusing an offer to be demoted back to radio, Horn was vocal in his intent to sue WFIL for the return of his good name and job. But before he'd be fully cleared from the drunk driving incident and could commence to fight for his contracted rights, his next arrest derailed him. It would have derailed anyone. Bob was indicted on charges of statutory rape.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* wasted no time in playing up the accusations. If Horn had lingering doubts about being railroaded, he was now certain he was dragooned. As bad as the rape charge looked, there was no truth to any of it. It was nothing more than the collaboration of an overzealous prosecutor and a highly questionable victim. There would be two trials, and hard evidence of Horn being an extortion target, which the district attorney's office would choose to ignore, before he was found not guilty.

Horn increasingly came to believe his continuing misfortune was the direct result of picking a bigger battle than he could fight. But instead of dropping his lawsuit to concentrate solely on clearing his name and moving on, he was consumed by what he felt was being done to him. And that's when he sealed his own fate.

As 1957 dawned, Horn was worry-ridden over the outcome of the statutory rape allegations. Petrified that he'd land in jail, he drank heavily. And then he drove. And this time the charges would stick. Not only would he be convicted, he'd serve the jail time he so feared because a child in the car he hit that night would never fully recover from the extent of her critical injuries.

With that mess, Horn indisputably violated his contract's moral turpitude clause. Going back to Bandstand would be the least of his worries. By then, the fans that still remembered him were trying to forget. Based on what they read, he was one bad guy. The three months he'd spent in prison would be nothing weighed against enduring the rest of his life knowing what he'd done.

And as hard as that was, it was bested by Bob's unwavering belief that his unjust reward for fostering the most successful show on daytime television was to be cast aside, like the garbage he was later made out to be.

Shortly after Horn was removed from Bandstand, the good looking, young fellow from WFIL-AM who inherited his radio show, once again took his place. Regardless of how you feel about Dick Clark, it's incontestable that he was not the architect of Horn's demise. He wasn't as much as a contributing factor. Even if he had it in his heart, he was powerless to pull it off. He was just a 26-year-old guy in the right place, at the right time.

Horn's exit perfectly positioned Clark to become the host of Bandstand. Perfectly positioned, that is, if you didn't count that Dick's interest in the music he played extended no further than quickly seeing it as a cash cow.

Compared to Horn, Clark was positively without soul, and he'd prove it on every level over the years. Who else could cover a record by a black artist, with another black artist who looked more "mass appeal"?

That's what happened with *"The Twist."* Fortunately for Hank Ballard, he wrote the tune and would receive royalties no matter who sung it. But unfortunately, he was too raw and "authentic" for *American Bandstand*. Ernest Evans was substituted. Though a South Philadelphia poultry farm worker, he looked crisp, clean, and absolutely inoffensive, in the white sweater he wore on the 45 RPM picture sleeve of his version of the song.

Actually it wasn't "his version." It was Ballard's down to the finest nuance. Even the name "Chubby Checker" was a cute invention. Clark's first wife came up with it as a play on "Fats Domino." Perhaps it's fitting, because Clark, like Checker, was an imitation— and when it came to soul, a very poor imitation of the grittier Ballard, and Horn.

That's not to take away from Clark's astounding achievements. Mainstream America favors safe and sanitized, and not only did Dick give them that, but say what you will about his tactics, he had the discipline and acumen to greatly contribute to rock and roll's becoming an industry. Clark might not have known a good singer from a canary, or remotely cared, but he indubitably knew how to market those he chose.

Whether the accusation Horn leveled about the cause of his downfall was accurate is inconsequential. What matters is that he fervently believed it. And when he acted on that belief, it begs a question: Why didn't he walk away from WFIL-TV when they first set him up? If he saw the ownership of the station as being so powerful that they could orchestrate his ultimate demise, why would he goad them with a lawsuit? The answer is perspective.

Horn was so focused on the wrong being done to him that he couldn't envision the bigger arena in which it was

occurring. When he knew in his heart he was right about his treatment, it was impossible for him to conclude it would be wrong to try to rectify it.

By no means is Bob Horn alone. Self-protection is inherent in human nature. It's our knee-jerk reaction to being attacked. Our perspective is almost instinctual. We are being wronged, and we must right it. Some battles are inadvisable on the surface, much as a smaller animal will choose to run rather than fight a predator. But the bulk of the injustices we'll encounter will not be that decisive. Far too often we fail to see that winning the skirmish means losing the battle. But even when the whole war's at stake, our greater victory may come in walking away.

Too often, it's a perspective that dawns on us after the fact. One of the most crushing stories along those lines belongs to John Rook. After decades of notable programming with call letters including KQV in Pittsburgh, WLS in Chicago, and KFI in Los Angeles, Rook formed a consultancy, which was also a winner. When he decided to buy a radio station in the Spokane, Washington area, it thrived too— so much so that a competitor made him one of those offers you can't refuse.

But John had no interest in selling his property. He couldn't have known his refusal would come back to haunt him, but it did, in short order, when his competitor, who had multiple stations in the same market, undercut him by offering rates to his advertisers, which were lower than Rook needed to charge to make a profit. But his competitor misjudged him. John didn't fold. Instead of dejected, he was energized. This was a solid case of unfair competition. His competitor committed a host of federal violations, which his lawyers assured him he could prove.

Rook's first awakening should have come when the Justice Department failed to act, though his attorneys maintained he'd prevail and win significant damages. And prevail he did, repeatedly. But in the end, by winning every

judgment, he lost it all. If his lawyers knew what might happen, they didn't tell John. And it never occurred to him that his victories would all be hollow.

Rook's competitor had virtually unlimited funds, and an in-house legal team. From their perspective, it would be simple to delay the matter with appeals and maneuvers until they exhausted every dollar John ever had. One of the worst feelings is that *"Of course!"* moment, when you realize what was right in front of you all along. Had Rook seen the other side's perspective, he would have changed his own. But their underhanded tactics were so patently illegal that all John could see was their flagrant violations, opposed to his inability to fight them.

Today Rook sees his future in a past that too many have forgotten. The 70 year old radio legend has created the *"Hit Parade Hall of Fame"* to honor all the artists who other organizations conveniently forget— including the entire crop from the Pop Standards era.

But you don't always need an adversary. Sometimes your perspective is so far off that you'll defeat yourself. That's what KFWB did in Los Angeles in 1964 when they underestimated The Beatles. The result of men nearing middle age making fun of the "mop tops" at the height of the British Invasion, needs no elaboration; so we'll leave it at KRLA walking off with their audience.

KRLA had been trying for over four years to defeat their entrenched rival with no luck. It wasn't until KFWB became complacent, that they let down their guard. Misjudging The Beatles was the result of KFWB's lack of attention to what was going on around them. They were too fat and happy.

KRLA was lean and intent on anything that would put them on top, though the owners of the station were solely focused on keeping the license. They'd lose their final appeal in the summer of 1964, but the air staffs' much-feared interim transfer of KRLA to a holding company,

would bring no real change to its sound.

As the KRLA disc jockeys continued to try to find the winning edge, they may have been no more prescient than KFWB when it came to judging the public taste. The station often sounded as if it was grasping for any straw. KRLA's infatuation prior to The Beatles, literally, was with straw—a brief fling with the hootenanny craze.

But by quickly embracing The Beatles in 1964, KRLA could do no wrong. Beatlemania was good. Sponsoring the Fab Four's first American tour was better. KRLA had finally done it. Riding on the coattails of the British Invasion, they proved to all of Southern California, they were the hip, happening station. KFWB would never recover from the blow dealt by *Beatle Radio,* or more aptly, the blow they'd dealt themselves.

Astonishingly, KRLA fell victim to its own perception blunder the following year. By seeing everything English as the reason for their triumph, staffers failed to understand it was a fad. Not that British bands would leave the charts the way most folk artists did after the hey-minute of Hootenanny, but British bands would quickly settle into being a part of contemporary music— and arguably in Los Angeles, not a major part, at that.

When *Boss Radio,* KHJ, debuted in Los Angeles in 1965, it was a revolution. The speed at which it occurred was secondary to its very different sound. KRLA would not begin to comprehend what was happening for quite awhile.

Historians are quick to note the effect Bill Drake had on Top 40 radio. His concept relied on tight control and excellent production values. While imitators believed he didn't allow disc jockeys to talk for more than ten seconds, in reality, he didn't want them to say anything that wasn't germane and entertaining. At KHJ, what The Real Don Steele could say in less than ten, and particularly the way he said it, blew all comers out of the water.

Undoubtedly KRLA noticed. But they missed the real

difference with KHJ: its music. Drake, a southerner who was no stranger to rhythm and blues, got a real lesson in Bay Area soul as he programmed KYA. When he heard the reaction that fellow announcers Tom Donahue and Bobby Mitchell, a couple of transplants from the east coast, got from fans at their R&B concerts in San Francisco, a town superficially appearing to be as far as one can get from such music, he paid rapt attention.

While KRLA aligned itself with the British Invasion, and acts akin to The Bobby Fuller Four, KHJ dug deeper into Motown and Memphis. Drake displayed his awareness of the changing complexion of the market and the role of soul for East Los Angeles Hispanics by playing tunes unheard on their competitors. Not only, and not a lot, but enough to attract a mass appeal audience hungry for what KHJ played.

KRLA was so wrapped up in their ultra-white approach they never perceived KHJ's greatest strength. With that misstep, KRLA inadvertently went into KFWB-mode by failing to see the music moved on. By the time they realized it, the market was radically changing. They never recovered, at least not as a mainstream contender. As for KFWB: in 1968, it dropped music for an all-news format that ironically was patterned after the tightness and repetition of the Top 40 sounds it replaced.

The KRLA and KFWB disc jockeys, on the whole, were wonderful. Many went on to highly visible careers, others made further marks on radio. From national names like Casey Kasem, to the local countdown done by Johnny Hayes, which captured the market every day at noon; or the incredibly creative Jim Hawthorne and the outstanding Dave Hull, ever the master of pacing and patter, possessing that exceptional ability to make you afraid to turn off the radio for fear you'd miss something— both stations were resplendent with talent, regardless of market ranking. Those truly were, the days.

Whenever you're faced with a major decision, or just a minor competitor, step back and reevaluate the room. The good news is we frequently have the leeway to do it. The bad news is we seldom will. Even when we're able, rarely are we willing to stop and put ourselves in our opponent's position.

When we do, most benignly and quite commonly, we may encounter people with whom we'll have sincere differences of opinions. Their conclusions arise from their perspectives, in the same way ours do. If we can manage to think outside ourselves and see their reasoning from their point of view, we may be able to reach common ground, or decide to amicably part.

But at other times, our opponents are nothing short of sinister. And our very salvation will come down to fully understanding their perspective and what they have at their disposal to fight us. This is no time to focus on *our* position. We'll know it very well. We'll need to be inside *their* heads, to determine whether it will be worth it to stand our ground. This is not to say that cutting and running is ever the route of choice. Nor is it to claim that there are never times we should fight to the death.

The point is you can't make any good decision until you step back and see the world from your opponent's perspective. In so doing, you will automatically readjust yours. And better to have a readjustment on your own terms before the fact, then painfully afterwards while you're sorting out your ashes.

Talk to any whistleblower and they'll fill you in. For some of them, forever fighting injustice is the only course they'll take. They're compelled to do no less. If that's you, then good luck and god-speed, as long as you're well aware of what you'll encounter.

For the rest of us, our actions spring from the belief it is inconceivable that circumstances so wrong, can't be righted. Too often, they won't be. Attorneys, disbarred for

proving transcripts of sworn testimony were court-altered; school board members, jailed for bringing rampant corruption to light; professors, losing tenure for mentioning official findings were scientifically impossible; federal employees, fired for refusing to stay silent in the face of blatant political lies— or the more garden-variety but equally personally devastating run-ins with child protective services, child support enforcement, or countless other agencies that officially ruin lives— all, a sad testimony to the shocking reality and utter disbelief that on too many occasions, being right doesn't matter.

When it happens to you, your world collapses. And even with the right perspective and the best possible moves, it might. But you can greatly insulate yourself from many of the worst atrocities you'll face, by appreciating this: the quality of your life is determined by the quality of the people with whom you choose to associate.

Not by a long shot will that tenet save you from everything bad. But it will go far to ensure your happiness. I'm only half joking when I say the easiest way to find out about someone is to ask them to take you for a ride. The nefarious will be quick to figuratively do so without invitation. More literally, a friend's driving will tell you a lot about his levels of trust, patience, flexibility, generosity, and common sense, for starters. You'll discover precisely who he is and he'll never know he told you. Try it.

But even when red flags wave everywhere, at some junctures their warnings are easy to ignore. Particularly with romance, good perspective is regularly replaced by wishful thinking. Over the years I've talked to a lot of folks who are divorced. The majority are men who call me on the radio to tell me about their treacherous ex. The stories range from funny to infuriating. All reveal the character of their former spouse. I'm certain that talking to the ex would give me an earful on my caller, but taking them at face value, there's a question I always ask: "*Are you surprised?*"

When I get anything resembling a yes, I ask another question: '*Back when you were dating, how did your ex treat the people in her life she disliked?*' I've never encountered anyone who has ever told me they didn't see the traits about which they complained, in full force earlier, against someone else.

Love is important, but it can also change your perspective in ways that won't be in your best interest, so notice how the object of your ardor treats her adversaries. If she has a former spouse, how does she treat him? As bad as it sounds, before you pop the question, here's what to ask yourself: If this doesn't work out and we've got kids, or a business, or anything of value in common, is this someone I'd be comfortable having as my ex?

Now and then, I'll hear from an irate caller accusing me of suggesting they go into marriage expecting it to end. To the contrary, if your choice is a good one, you'll only reveal the attributes of the person you'll never want to leave. And if your conclusion is less rosy, you can get out before it's too late. You'll sidestep the heat of the moment with an unbiased and reliable view, if you'll look at it from the perspective of being her enemy. Hopefully, you're already pretty clear your intended won't treat her friends badly.

It's a single-question litmus test, which works well in evaluating any close relationship. But there are many instances where you'll be better served by first evaluating yourself. As important as it is to make the right choices, understanding why you made them is critical. It will give you the perspective you need, especially when your life isn't as good as you'd like it to be.

Chapter 14
The Importance of Perspective – Part Three
Stuck in the Middle

Proper perspective is what saved Carol Ford from deep depression 30 years ago. Her ability to focus on why she was doing what she was doing enabled her to do it without falling apart. To industry friends who didn't know the full story, it appeared she had completely lost her mind.

Carol was a radio wunderkind. Her first job after graduating from college was hosting the overnight show on 50,000 watt WOWO in Ft. Wayne, a Westinghouse station that sounded much bigger than the market in which it was located. Not only did she fill a coveted position, since the station was heard in a third of the country back then, but she did it better than anyone ever had. While I was laboring on the air in Louisville, I caught her seemingly effortless act one night, and realized I could be a disc jockey for the next hundred years and not sound as good as she did.

When Carol was ready to move to a bigger market after a couple years, she had her pick. She chose San Francisco and KYA, a heritage station then owned by Avco Broadcasting. Her trajectory was clear. She was going anywhere she wanted to go. In 1980, Carol selected Los Angeles, but instead she wound up out of work in Cleveland. After about a year, she found a job. The good news was it was a morning drive slot, the most important day-part on any station. The bad news was plentiful. Besides her aversion to waking up at 4 AM, she had to drive through 20 miles of unplowed snow, often measured in feet to get to work, in winter.

In retrospect, summer was no better. Carol was never one to enjoy company barging into the control room while she was on the air. Granted, it doesn't bother every

personality, though no disc jockey wants to hear someone else's voice in their headphones when their microphone is hot. That's not what Carol heard. She heard "*Moooooooo*." There's really no way to fully capture her reaction. The station's format was urban, but she knew she was in the country when a cow wedged its head through the window. Under any other circumstance, her downward mobility would have been crushing. There was no way onlookers could figure out what happened to 'the girl most likely'.

But as Paul Harvey used to say, here's the rest of the story… Before Carol could get to Los Angeles, a family crisis called her back to Cleveland. There was never any doubt in her mind she'd be there for her mother, and she was glad she was financially able to return home. For over a year, her focus was on her mom. When her mother no longer required her full-time attention, Carol was not yet comfortable leaving the city but she was ready to begin to resurrect her career.

Whenever you limit your choice to a narrow geographic area, you're less apt to find what you want. Carol found bovine heaven. At least she got exercise—running to the bank to make sure it wasn't *her* paycheck that bounced. Had she not kept her emotional attention on the reason she was there, the love she had for her ailing parent, it would have been very painful to endure.

Once her mom was fully stable, Carol returned to her rightful role: #1 in afternoon drive, in New York. It never occurred to her that she wouldn't rebound, and it also never occurred to her that it would matter. Family came first.

Self-directed people have built-in perspective. Whether it's someone, like Carol, who has her priorities firmly in mind, or it's the classic goal seeker; all such folks are centered on the pursuit of their objectives. They will do whatever it takes to accomplish their aims. With few exceptions, ambitious jocks find themselves in places they

never thought they'd be willing to go, in the name of getting experience.

For me, it was Louisville, and to call it a come down would be putting it in a good light. I had been on top of the world, as promotion manager for Charlie Rich Enterprises at the height of the late entertainer's career. While anyone could have gotten Charlie's records on the radio, my primary job was to make sure other artists in his business manager's stable were also exposed. It was said, I did it well. I managed to push an unknown, David Wills, into the Top 10 on the *Billboard* country charts, three times in a row. Had my focus been on enjoying my position's perks, which were many, I would have presumably kept that job for years.

But that wasn't my perspective. What I saw was a job where I got lavish praise when a record reached the top, but those records don't need much help. Beyond mailing them out and maybe making a follow up phone call, program directors were at least astute enough to recognize a big hit. And no matter what I did, an absolute dog would not do well. My contribution, as I saw it, was to turn a borderline record into a mid-charter. That took effort. Achieving the near impossible however, was frequently met with the attitude of, 'We couldn't do better than that?' I found it hard to reconcile that slacking off on a guaranteed smash brought bonuses, and working myself into a frenzy to push a lackluster record brought criticism.

Furthering my malaise, I made a vital discovery that would help me repeatedly through my career. It came into play in a big way a decade later when I was radio editor for *Billboard Magazine*: people weren't talking to me— they were talking to my chair. It is the high-powered job, not the person filling it that is the magnet for attention. That recognition was nothing short of a bolt of "instant perspective," and it has saved me from the mistake of believing I'm any different from the listeners who call me.

Back in Nashville, the position that was envied by others, increasingly made no sense to me. I wanted to be on the radio in the worst way— and yeah, as I often say about such things, "worst" was the way I got there.

As bad as it was, my perspective saved me from it being worse. A long-time friend was running a major radio station with vast coverage. When he heard I wanted to be on the air, he offered to give me some overnight slots. My reply was instant: not on your life. I had worked in enough radio stations to know that without sufficient experience, being on the air is much more a skill than an art.

Until then, I had several radio jobs— continuity, production, music, news, and assorted others, but never had I held down a full-time air-shift. With rare exceptions, especially the aforementioned Carol Ford, being a disc jockey is like learning to play the tuba. We can know everything about its construction, appearance, history, and maintenance, but until we sit in front of it and practice every day for years, music won't come out of it. And until we pass the point where we're technically proficient, we won't know if we have that extra element separating us from the rest of the players.

In the same manner for radio, you've got to put in the time to nail down the basics before you'll know if you've got the winning edge. And I wasn't about to start hammering in a highly visible arena. I knew I'd be bad. In truth, I was worse. But my salvation was no one listened to *The Big X*. I was also delighted that WXVW's format was oldies, and I had the freedom to play what I liked. End of good news.

Similar to most fledgling stations, this one wasn't a showplace. From the day I arrived to the day I left, there was talk about the "new building." Given the shape of this place, building it wasn't optional, though there was no evidence of construction during my tenure. I went from a lavish life, where my job included protracted stays in hotels,

including a suite at the Las Vegas Hilton, to a remarkable setting. Remarkable that it could exist, that is. Walking in the door of *The Big X*, it's a toss up whether the stench from the dripping rusty sulfurous water hit you first, or the visual of being in the middle of a rotting kitchen with a receptionist desk grabbed your attention.

This was more problematic in summer when the mosquitoes hatched. Before long, I was dubbed assistant chief engineer because I had the required FCC license and could trudge out into the field to take meter readings when the guy who really knew what he was doing, was on vacation. Initially, I thought that task would be worse during a winter snow. Then I learned about the station's tornado warning plan. With a totally straight face, the manager instructed us to leave the building in the event of an impending whirlwind. As I stared out the window at the station's questionably supported tower, I figured I'd take my chances indoors. It was the only time I chose to be inside that structure, advisable or not.

And there was a ghost. I won't detail that adventure in recording other than to say all those EVPs Art Bell played have nothing on me. Nor will I elaborate on the manual plumbing. Are you wondering when I rang up the health department? Unbeknownst to me, it was around the same time that Joe Buchman, a part-time kid straight out of high school, made the same call. Also news to me, Joe had more clout in that crowd, since his father, a local doctor, was on the county board of health. I left before the building burned down, but what I took with me was priceless: a year on the air in afternoon drive.

This is not a tale about how I got my chops. When I left Louisville, I still wasn't good. But never once while I was there, did I question my decision to walk away from a lifestyle others cherished. From Nine Mile Hill where the newest, classiest building in Nashville sat, I moved to two rooms over a garage, adjacent to a house converted into an

old folks home where demented seniors hung out the windows and yelled.

To get to my hovel, you had to walk through a garage lined with old toilets. My front door opened into what can be best described as a concrete dungeon. The two rooms above it were quite inhabitable, though I will forever recall the look of shock and awe on assorted meter readers' faces when I allowed them to enter the anteroom. To say the least, the place lived up to the name I put on my mailbox: "Hopeless Acres."

About the only remnant remaining from Nashville was my Corvette. Since I paid cash, there was no need to get rid of it, but when I'd glance at it in the mottled alley behind my dilapidated home, or the uneven dirt parking lot at work, it was a graphic indication of where I'd been and where I was.

At least I knew where I was going. That wasn't the case for Tampa's Q105, WRBQ-FM in 1989. They had a much better handle on where they'd been. The history of the AM/FM combo is synonymous with the trajectory of Top 40 radio in Tampa. The AM led the market in the '60s. The FM adopted the format in late 1973, spending the rest of the decade fending off all manner of competitors. But by 1980 when Scott Shannon arrived, it was in 8th place.

Shannon is properly credited with orchestrating the station's astounding turnaround. He took the market by storm when he built the original multi-talent festival atmosphere of the *Q Morning Zoo*. It was a wildly popular concept, catapulting Q105 to victory around the clock. Even the market's easy listening station operated under the assumption that much of their audience listened to the *Q Zoo,* in the morning.

In 1985, two years after Shannon left to establish WHTZ, New York's Z100, Randy Kabrich became Q105's program director. Randy is perhaps radio's greatest tactician, so it was almost a given he'd manage to increase

the station's dominance.

By 1989, Q105 was #1 overall, and in every specific demographic from birth to death. That extraordinary reality made no one, and everyone, a direct competitor. Q105's triumph made it largely a moot point. The station proved an old adage wrong: it *was* possible to be all things to all people. When it came to radio in Tampa over 20 years ago, Q105 was that, and more.

Across town, WFLZ was nothing to no one. It wasn't even WFLZ before its purchase by Jacor Communications, in 1988. It was the FM counterpart to WFLA, which had been everything from country to beautiful music, using several sets of forgettable call letters, the most recent, before the Jacor acquisition being WPDS. "*Paradise*" was hardly a fitting description.

In 1989 after floundering with oldies, Jacor decided the best approach for WFLZ would be to go after the most dispensable and quickest to capture demo: teens. Their critics reminded them that it would be easy for Q105 to disregard their effort, abdicate kids, and continue to be the stranglehold market leader with any viable age group.

Their critics had no idea how wrong they were. Everyone, including the programming head of Jacor, was stunned by what happened to *The Power Pig*, a handle originally meant to be nothing more than the working title for an attempt to fascinate young males.

By the kindest estimation, *The Power Pig* was crude. Females were largely repulsed, but it was a tremendous lure for adolescent boys. Jacor estimated that victory would take a while, maybe a few years, giving them time to figure out what to do after the station's initial impact. What they didn't count on was the remote possibility Q105 would commit suicide in under a month by their stunning lack of perception.

In light of the newcomer, Kabrich advised Q105 management to concentrate on serving their most valuable

audience— those at least old enough to drink. He knew well that teens were volatile, fickle, and undesirable to advertisers. His wise advice about *The Power Pig* was simple: ignore them. Instead, management ignored him. Kabrich quit rather than be associated with what he knew was coming.

Q105 somehow believed a loss of teens would threaten their overall #1 status. What's astonishing is anyone working in radio for ten minutes knows that being #1 across the board means much to the ego but nothing to the bottom line. Financial gains come from serving an audience advertisers want. While different sponsors target different age ranges, none of them look at total numbers or teens. But Q105 was completely thrown off course, miraculously convinced that the loss of their symbolic success would precipitate the end of all that mattered. It's unfathomable what kind of reasoning went into that erroneous perception.

Getting into the trough with *The Power Pig* was similar to any hog fight. Q105 got dirty and the Pig liked it. By making programming changes to try to keep teens tuned into the station, Q105 lost it all. By nature, teens go to the new thing, and equally naturally, adults look for other alternatives when a station's programming is beneath them.

If ever there was a radio waste, this was it. By winning so fast, Jacor had no idea what to do next, and what they won, wasn't profitable. Worst of all, by losing all perspective, Q105 discarded the heritage and goodwill, which would have allowed them to fend off any contender for decades to come.

It would be a few years, before WFLZ found its first financial footing. It would take blowing off *The Power Pig* and creating a more mainstream contemporary hit radio station. And never again would Q105 come close to dominating the market.

Q105's demise came down to a classic perception

problem. The stunner was how obvious it should have been to those in charge of the station. But too often, what should be obvious is not, even when it's public knowledge. Regarding Chicano favorites, everyone in East Los Angeles knew what KRTH, *K-Earth 101,* couldn't fathom.

The FM station had done well for over three decades. Seemingly consistent in approach, oldies fanatics knew otherwise. Now and then, the solid gold outlet leaned more toward '70s, '60s, mainstream pop, album rock, and stretching reality, R&B. K-Earth was very popular in spite of the tweaking, which blessedly was separated by years of success until another attempt was made to make the station relevant to the times, whatever current management felt they were.

Along the way, numerous disc jockeys, including some from Los Angeles' Top 40 heyday— Johnny Hayes, Robert W. Morgan, The Real Don Steele, Dave Hull, Humble Harve, and Art Laboe; graced the airwaves. And so it was, that in 1998, K-Earth program director Mike Phillips thought it would be a good idea to hire Dick Hugg. He figured the iconic "Huggy Boy," would be able to bring his huge Chicano audience with him. Unfortunately, Phillips was clueless as to why they listened.

Huggy Boy first came to life on Los Angeles radio in the early 1950s. His show, from the window of Dolphin's of Hollywood, was immensely popular with Rhythm and Blues fans. Dolphin's, named for record label owner John Dolphin, was not remotely close to Hollywood. Located in the industrial area south of downtown LA, it was convenient to South-Central, the African American area fertile with musicians.

As the '50s ended, Hugg saw promise in courting a growing group: Hispanics. He not only featured their favorites, he nurtured the songs they recorded. Typically, the local barrio bands were first heard on Huggy's show. Much like his biggest rival, Art Laboe, neither jock was

renowned for his on-air patter. Both were revered for their instinctive ability to find and play the right records.

Beyond that, they were as opposite as night and day. Laboe is the consummate businessman. Coining the phrase "*Oldies but Goodies*," his Original Sounds record label put out the first oldies compilation albums, produced several hits, and held the rights to many more. Art's nightly remote broadcasts from Scrivner's Drive-in are well remembered. Less recognized is his entrepreneurial spirit, which led him to purchase his own club on the Sunset Strip.

Fans just see Art as someone who loves their music. From being the first to spin a rock and roll record on the West Coast, by the 1960s Laboe was the voice of the Chicanos, a voice that spoke through the tunes he played. His perception of his future was dead on. Art knew who to serve, and how to serve them. That's not to take away his obvious passion for the music, rather to highlight his disciplined approach to keeping it alive. To listeners, Art's a homeboy, who at almost 85 years old, still plays all their requests and dedications, and puts on sold out concerts. His success is nothing short of a phenomenon.

With Huggy Boy, what you saw was what you got. And you saw and heard him continuously around Southern California, on various radio stations and at various events. Driven solely by his feelings for the music and his immersion into the Hispanic culture, to Hugg, business and accounting were foreign languages. In the early 1970s, he followed Wolfman Jack on 1090 AM. By the time Huggy arrived, XERB had become XEPRS, *1090 Express,* though the concept was identical.

Like Wolfman, Huggy Boy had no shortage of record packages including *"The Low Rider Special,"* and *"Flashbacks in Stereo."* "Stereo" was a stretch, but at least there was no doubt the cuts were original hits, since most of them came directly from 45rpm records with their skips,

pops, and crackles crudely mastered into a long, long playing LP. Some albums listed songs but no artists. Others had compilation titles bearing no resemblance to the advertised package.

Unlike Art & Wolfman, Hugg didn't own his own label. Whether there was a label at all was questionable. Often, there were no covers or artwork. Not only were royalties completely foreign to Huggy Boy, he had no idea that income from his concerts was taxable. In fact, before being sentenced to a year in jail for tax evasion, he pled ignorance— telling the judge in full sincerity that he never knew he was supposed to give the government a cut.

Hugg was an original, and in many ways, an innocent. He'd dive into situations no one in their right mind would attempt, such as delivering the COD orders of his records in person, so he could pocket the extra fees. No one told Huggy that anything he was doing couldn't work. He fervently believed it could, and for decades it did. His on-air approach was as haphazard as the rest of his life. The thing that made it congeal was the music he played.

Huggy Boy was contradictory to corporate K-Earth, but in a desperate attempt to attract his huge Hispanic audience, it seemed to be a good plan to put him on the air in the weeknight slot. Art Laboe wasn't remotely an option; being hugely successful with his own *"Killer Oldies"* syndicated show and extensive business holdings. Huggy had none of that. He was hired.

It seemed as if Mike Phillips had the right perspective on why this would work, until you actually heard the show. Then, Mike's profound lack of understanding surfaced. Huggy, who indisputably knew what music to play— music foreign to Phillips— was not allowed to play it, not even to suggest it. He was forced, without discussion, to exclusively air what Phillips picked. The eighth wonder of the world might be how K-Earth thought a guy whose personality sprang entirely from the music he embraced,

would have any draw without it. The most amazing part is the show lasted for about four years.

It can be argued that Phillips' problem was less perception than total ignorance. Herb Jepko's defeat, on the other hand, was the direct result of forgetting what he knew so well.

Long before his fall, accurate perception was squarely on Jepko's side. In 1964, he was a disc jockey on 50,000 watt KSL in Salt Lake City, owned by the Mormon Church. The station, as did many back then, signed off at midnight. Owners incorrectly perceived the time as worthless. Herb took a contrary view.

After working in Los Angeles at KFI where he witnessed the formidable talent of Ben Hunter and the impact of his overnight *Night Owl* program, Herb knew that there was sufficient audience for the day-part. KSL offered to move Jepko to the graveyard shift on two conditions: he'd buy the time from them, and if it didn't work out, he couldn't have his mid-morning slot back.

Herb snapped it up, and *The Nitecaps* began. By the end of the decade, the show was a sub-culture, grossing more money than some entire stations. Expanding was easy, as the industry operated under the same KSL perception that no money would be had in the middle of the night. Thus stations were willing to sell the time cheaply. Jepko added 50,000 watt stations in Seattle, Tulsa, Louisville, and later, Baltimore.

Herb knew well how to make money with his show, but industry observers were perplexed by its success. A listen to it was a throwback to simpler times. No talk of religion, politics, or anything of substance was a rule. Another dictum was quite ingenious. To call the program you had to become a "*Nitecap,*" by writing for your free membership card.

What Jepko got out of the deal was a mailing list greatly of interest to his non-traditional sponsors. Ignoring

all the advertising agencies that believed late night radio was worthless, Herb went after companies in need of exposure that could measure results. He delivered his aging audience to them on a platter. It's said, Jepko was the entire impetus behind the growth of Icy Hot, a salve for rheumatism. His insurance plans were so in demand that his widow received residual checks into the 21st Century. And his conclaves, tours, and trips were sellouts.

His monthly magazine, *The Wick*, was an advertising magnet in itself. Never mind the rest of radio, Herb was his own industry. And for all the sneers and snubs Jepko received from radio pros, it's also true that many broadcasters were influenced by his amazing ability to communicate directly with his audience. Art Bell, the originator of *Coast to Coast*, admits freely that *The Nitecaps* had an impact on him. His choice of multiple phone numbers for different regions was a throwback to Herb.

Not that it wasn't easy to laugh at Jepko— from aging organists to stuttering poets, Herb gave shut-ins an on-air home. Whether he was entertained by them, or at their expense, was a debate among some of us. It certainly explained his penchant for alcohol. However, the consensus from his inner circle was that Jepko was the real deal, sincere as they came.

For over a decade, Herb's perspective never wavered. He knew who his audience was, what sponsors they'd support, and how best to bring them together. As a business model, it was close to perfect. But when Mutual Broadcasting came calling, it was irresistible. In the days before satellite, networks had to be hard wired across the country. That kept their numbers, miniscule. For radio, there were four: CBS, NBC, ABC, and Mutual. And without using one of them, national coverage was difficult, if not impossible.

The thought of blanketing America was enough to obliterate Herb's first-hand, long-proven perspective. When

Mutual proposed a deal whereby they'd put him on hundreds of stations and sell the advertising time, while he'd pay for the newsman and transmission expenses from Salt Lake City to Washington; Herb only heard "hundreds of stations."

Instantly, Jepko forgot his success was wholly dependent on the radio industry's inability to sell late night inventory. Why would he think a network steeped in traditional practices, fortified by revenue from agencies and major sponsors, would understand how to market commercials for his show, to say nothing of having the contacts or desire to do it? When a salesman can make $1,000 on a daytime spot, why would he concentrate on an advertiser with which he was unfamiliar to make $100? The answer is, he wouldn't. But Herb wasn't hearing that.

At the thought of massive expansion, Herb lost his perspective. Mutual cleared *The Nitecaps* on many stations, as Herb knew they could. But the network also confirmed their inherent inability to court late night sponsors, as Herb's success, and the reasons for it, should have warned. Within two years, Herb was essentially bankrupt, and Mutual moved on to another program.

(For history buffs, it was not Larry King— not yet. The show, which replaced *The Nitecaps* featured Long John Nebel and his wife Candy. Decades earlier, Nebel had been on WOR in New York doing a program similar to the aliens and otherworld approach later adopted by Art Bell, but shortly after taking the Mutual job, cancer claimed his life. Mutual's president of the moment, Ed Little, was a former South Florida radio station licensee. He remembered Larry King's Miami glory days and knew that the host was back in Florida trying to recover from the blow his gambling habits had dealt him. Little needed someone quickly. He figured Larry would be affordable and good. King can thank Little, and the little-known Herb Jepko, for the position that started his surprising ascent.)

Herb tried for years to return to his glory. He never came close. By the time he recognized his perception error, he was powerless to right it. He died in 1995.

Far from Herb's plight, my Louisville story was comparable to Carol Ford's experience. It was not a tale of how depressed I was, or how I hated that year. On balance, I loved it. The reason came down to perspective. I was able to appreciate being there, because I focused on where it would take me. It would be years before I'd arrive, but by the time I did, I realized that some of the so-called "bad things" were really quite good.

While other females were outraged at the 'oppressive discrimination' they encountered by not being allowed on the racetrack during the "*30 Days in May*" month-long promotion preceding the *Indianapolis 500*, I was quietly pleased. After leaving *The Big X* for a brief stint in North Carolina, I was in Indiana working at WIBC— the race's flagship, and the most successful radio station in the state. I understood completely why I was there. In fact I played my advantages to get the job.

WIBC's signal, as is the case with many AM stations, is directional at night. By FCC rules back then, it meant a licensed engineer had to be on duty. That made it difficult for such stations to easily comply with the FCC mandate on putting women on the air. As it was very unusual for a gal to have the required license, she couldn't be scheduled in the middle of the night without the extra expense of an engineer.

I was not ready to be heard on WIBC during the day under any circumstance, but when my cover letter told them I was a female with a First Class license who wanted to work overnights, I was pretty sure I could have been speaking Farsi on the tape I sent, and still have been hired.

As discrimination got me there, it would have been greedy to complain about it. And with the *Indianapolis 500*, it was a bonus. The station was entrenched in the race. It

was the biggest annual event in the city. Every WIBC personality was assigned several stints in Speedway to hype the upcoming contest— every one of them but me, because I was a woman, not allowed on the track. In addition to overnights six nights a week, I was also working a part-time weekend job at a disco, so the idea of losing sleep to go to a racetrack was not appealing. From my perspective, this discrimination thing was a great way to get out of work.

But often reality is not that accommodating. This is not to put a good spin on what can be very hurtful, financially and emotionally. Plenty of us have had more than our share of disappointments. There is no question that unfairness exists and always will. But when you encounter a bad situation, you've got two choices: fight it, or find a way to embrace it. For every conceivable condition in your life, even the worst possible developments, there are advantages and disadvantages. Though the positives may be outweighed dramatically, you can nonetheless decide where to put your focus.

While it may sound suspiciously like Pollyanna is lurking, holding those half-empty, half-full glasses; this is pure pragmatism. It's about understanding that it's easier to succeed by playing your upside than fighting your downside— and you do it by unemotionally examining your perception.

For an all too trite example, how many "angry white men," particularly younger ones, decry affirmative action, saying that they can't get a foot in the door? How many minorities complain they can't climb the corporate ladder? Both statements are valid statistically. But for every statistic, there are exceptions and it is in your power to become one. If our white guy realizes it will take him a while to get in, but once he's employed he'll have a better chance at advancing; and our minority gal recognizes she has immediate entry-level opportunities in many firms, a few of which hold confirmed promise for promotion—

then both build on their strengths. It doesn't change unsettling odds, but it's empowering to take charge of your life rather than become a victim to anything.

Best of all, it's easier to reach your dreams when you go with the flow. Sometimes, it's the only way. The history of talk radio is built on that predicament. By the coming of the 1960s, it wasn't lost on ABC that radio's future would be found in the consistency of the Top 40 formula. While the tendency during the '50s had been to hold on to the old line network fare, which worked so well prior to the growth of television, it couldn't be ignored that of the AM radio stations owned by ABC, the two most promising were WXYZ in Detroit and KQV in Pittsburgh— both of which had been airing Top 40 since 1958.

It was decided the entire chain would adopt the format in 1960. Before the year was over, WLS in Chicago and WABC in New York made the switch, though both had to deal with the problem of network politics forcing the carriage of ABC features including an hour every weekday, for *Don McNeill's Breakfast Club,* an out of place, aural reminder of the '30s.

Additionally, WABC had to air Joe Rosenfeld's *Big Joe's Happiness Exchange*. The all-night brokered program devoted to helping odd people in big need was locked in through September 1961. That Rosenfeld could acquire the time, as he had on various venerable New York outlets since 1949, amplifies how big a need there was for a thorough revamping of radio.

While it might have been a stretch in the beginning to claim, WABC or WLS was playing "*More Music*," it would have been pretty much "no music," if ABC's west coast stations tried the approach. Not only were Los Angeles' KABC and San Francisco's KGO forced to air the same ABC fare as did their east coast counterparts, they were also saddled with features from a regional Pacific feed.

Had ABC management tried Top 40 in California, it's

doubtful more than three records would have aired each hour. Instead, they went with the flow. Keeping the value of consistency firmly in mind, programmers capitalized on the spoken word content of the numerous network features, by filling the remaining time with talk shows.

It's all about playing the hand that's dealt you. You can rile against what isn't working, or you can work with what is. As you've undoubtedly heard before, perception is reality. Everything changes when you readjust your viewpoint. That said, in any situation that's less than ideal, a healthy dose of creativity can come in very handy.

Chapter 15
The Value of Creativity – Part One
Winning the Battle

For most disc jockeys there is absolutely no upside to a downward trend in the ratings. Only one of them, Dan Sorkin, has turned statistical annihilation into a promotion for his show, and not just any promotion, one that would span weeks and draw television and newspaper coverage.

Dan had a rapier wit and the sardonic ability to capitalize on the trends of the day, which, by the coming of the 1960s, included two very evident preoccupations. One was the increasing interest Americans seemed to have in saving things. Not as in collecting, more like protecting the whales or whatever else was handy. Humorous to Dan, most would-be saviors joined marches having had no idea what they were supporting. They'd wear buttons, carry signs, and appear to be passionate— about something, the details of which were nebulous, at best. Sorkin wasn't the only one to use the phenomenon to his advantage.

The 1950s movie, *Jamboree,* for all viewers may have known, was proof of the only time that big screen roles were used as payola payoffs. Nothing else in this rock and roll feature film explains why radio men throughout the country were included. A national telethon was the ruse to get announcers into the script. As the scenes switched from city to city, pleas for donations were constant with no mention as to how the money might be used. But, at least *Jamboree* referred to the cause as "this dreaded disease," narrowing it down significantly beyond the efforts of the concerned citizens of the day.

Sorkin found an infinitely more creative use for the social disconnect. He paired it with a huge contemporary issue: forced anonymity. The hue and cry was that we, the human race, were being reduced to a number. In the

era of Univac computers, no longer did we have individuality. Now we had punch cards for bill payments. And our telephone exchanges, our Mohawks, Plazas, Unions, and so forth, were becoming mere digits.

(Prior to standardization, six and seven digit telephone numbers were the norm, identified by the name of the switching office to which they belonged. After the change to *"all-number dialing,"* PEnnyslvania 6-5000 became 736-5000, for instance. Stan Freberg had a wonderful parody on it in 1966, "*They Took Away Our MurrayHills!*" Today it seems quaint and insignificant, but there was absolute furor 50 years ago about being reduced to a number.)

Sorkin started a campaign to "*Save Rose Bimler.*" He never mentioned from what she needed saving, though that didn't deter his audience. If asked, he would have explained Rose was drowning. Drowning in obscurity, in Cicero, Illinois, but never once did it come up on the air.

Sorkin so ardently championed the elusive cause of Mrs. Bimler that his listeners contributed buttons, bumper stickers, and an official song, which Dan used as an anthem. Fans sung along with him. While it's impossible to say how many were in on the gag, it's a good bet the bulk of his audience wasn't. Nothing else would explain why the educational television station in Chicago wanted him to produce a documentary on Rose's plight.

Sorkin agreed and enlisted the help of a San Francisco legend, Don Sherwood, a cynically hilarious soul heard mornings on KSFO. Sherwood saw the value in playing along and quickly agreed to distribute the buttons in the Bay Area. Sorkin then found a jock in New York to complete their troika. They teamed up on the air and phoned the Russian embassies around the country, enquiring what they were doing about the Bimler woman.

The initial response was wonderfully political: the embassy spokesmen said they couldn't release any

information. After sufficient calls from listeners in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, the Russians assured Sorkin they'd get back to him about the fate of Mrs. Bimler. He's still waiting, though a lot of us are reasonably confidant files are open on poor Rose, at all the Russian embassies in America, maybe the world.

The Bimler "movement," alone, should have given the A.C. Nielsen Company pause. Even if they weren't adept at surveying radio, which they briefly attempted to do back in the early '60s, someone should have noticed it before they released their report: the Chicago numbers were out and Sorkin had none. Bad enough that a show sold out for three years straight could rate an asterisk, but worse, Nielsen made the error in its own hometown.

Sorkin was in his prime. He bemoaned his listener-less fate, explaining that the best disc jockeys knew how to talk to the audience as if they were only one person, but he couldn't even do that because he was talking to himself.

As expected, listeners flooded the phone lines to assure him he was not alone. He questioned their existence, and his sanity, since Nielsen couldn't possibly have been wrong. He suggested they communicate as if they were real, and write to A.C. Nielsen, to let them know that they were listening, if not from Chicago, from the hereafter.

Needless to say, Nielsen's mailroom overflowed. And some of the letters were from the advertising agencies, which used their service. Nielsen answered each writer with an explanatory form letter.

It was more than Sorkin could have hoped. He got back on the air and confessed how confused he was that this powerful rating company, which held his future in their hands, was crazy enough to communicate with non-existent people. He suggested his listeners call the ratings giant, and ask for an explanation.

The phone lines imploded: nothing incoming, none

outgoing— except for the call from the idiot at Nielsen, berating Sorkin for his actions. Now the gloves were off.

Dan made an impassioned plea— not for himself, but for all Americans, all Chicagoans, all of the 'little people' who had been recently reduced to a number, and now no longer counted at all. He suggested they stick up for their rights, prove their existence, and join him in person to picket A.C. Nielsen.

Over 600 of them did. Within months, Nielsen stopped surveying the radio industry. While the story is wonderfully mischievous, and absolutely true, its moral is overlooked: even in the most debilitating circumstances, with enough creativity, you can thrive. Sorkin always has.

Dan was a wild man on and off the air. After Chicago, he wound up in San Francisco, competing with his old friend Don Sherwood. As he was about to join Sherwood's station, a motorcycle accident claimed a year of his life and his left leg. That too, he handled creatively. *Stumps'R Us,* the whimsical support group he founded is still going strong— as, at over 80 years old, is Dan.

Few among us have faced a catastrophic loss of ratings, let alone limbs, but we all encounter challenges. How we react to misfortune— both inwardly and for all to see, makes the difference between misery and contentment. A positive attitude is mandatory, though often it's the novel approach that wins the day.

In the latter '60s, when Ron Chapman took a job at KVIL in Dallas, he would have been happy with any audience at all. It was quite a change from his run as Irv Harrigan on KLIF's omnipresent *Charlie & Harrigan* morning show, and his stint as host of the popular TV show *Sump'n Else*. Chapman was planning to leave town, but changed his mind after he saw Cleveland. With nowhere else to go, he settled for KVIL, a station in distress.

Completing a tumultuous sale, what KVIL's new owners got were studios inundated with water, void of

records— just as well, since the turntables didn't have cartridges. Ron, along with Hugh Lampman and Jack Schell, two announcers from city owned WRR-AM, were hired.

In a combination of live and recorded performances, the three were the station. Chapman recalls a Friday afternoon when all of them were heading out of the building together. Schell remarked, '*If this elevator fell, the entire staff of KVIL would be wiped out.*' And Lampman replied, '*Yeah and nobody would notice until Wednesday.*'

That summed up Ron's challenge. He was charged with making nothing sound like something. He did it with automation. It solved many problems, but also created a whole new category of trouble.

For Dallas weather, there were eight pre-recorded announcements covering every forecast from '*Isn't it a beautiful day?*' to thunderstorms. But Ron was upset when the variety wouldn't properly address those freak, unseasonable storms. After one such incident, he developed the WOW tape: "*Weather Outside the Window.*" The next time hail or any other oddity hit, listeners heard, '*Can you believe this, you know what we've been forecasting all day, but just look outside the window!*'

Dealing with the financial reality of the fledgling FM station proved trickier. But Chapman was up to that too. By buying rotators, he managed to have billboards seen all over town. Outdoor media companies would designate certain boards to be available for 13-week contracts rather than annual terms. Businesses that couldn't commit to a year long run, could buy a board for a quarter. But it was no secret, which boards would rotate. And no secret that KVIL was buying them.

By 1975, KVIL was gaining ground, but still fighting with its closest FM competitor. KNUS had almost unlimited funds as it was owned by Gordon McLendon, and run by his son, Bart. Knowing that KVIL would rely on rotating

boards, KNUS bought the slot directly before and after every rotator. At a time when it was crucial, Chapman thought he was locked out of the market for a year.

Mulling over his options, it appeared there weren't any. And there was one location he could not afford to lose. It was a particularly high traffic area on the Stemmons Freeway. While Chapman could buy the rotator, drivers would speed by and see his smiling face followed by the board for KNUS. It gave his competition the last word. For many programmers, this would have been a major blow, maybe a reason to look for another job. But Ron never viewed what he did as a job. To him, it was a mission.

Reviewing every possible play, it hit him. Chapman bought the Stemmons board. But instead of his smiling mug facing forward, there were several characters looking back, pointing toward the upcoming KNUS visual. The slogan was uncomplicated: *Look who's still behind KVIL.*

The ploy netted Chapman a job offer from KNUS, which he declined. He preferred to remain at the station that, a few years later with George Johns' help, he'd build into the most successful adult contemporary outlet in America.

Chapman may not have wanted to go to Cleveland, but that didn't stop a Cleveland station from taking a page directly from his playbook. Though 3WE was not in the kind of financial straights as was KVIL, they couldn't resist capitalizing on a rival's advertising campaign. WGAR urged their audience: *Follow The Leader!* The slogan was entrenched in their positioning. The obvious inference, that WGAR was the indisputable market champ, was the image management wanted. They should have thought a bit more about what would happen when the billboards went up.

It was the opening their competitor needed. 3WE bought all the boards behind WGAR's placements. When motorists whizzed by, they'd first be told to follow the leader, and then they'd see: *The Leader 3WE!*

WENO in Nashville, managed to avoid those problems, and the billboard companies, entirely. Outsiders are largely unaware that Nashville, the long-time home of country music, ignored the genre until fairly recently. Society preferred to play up its banking, insurance, and publishing ties. Successful radio stations aired anything but C&W. WSIX-FM broke the mold in the mid-'60s with *Countrypolitan.* It was upscale, subdued, and in stereo. Until the last few decades, WSM's airing of the Grand Ole Opry was more of an aberration, separate from its usual MOR format, in the same way that WLAC's nightly rhythm and blues programming was kept in the dark. But for stations such as WENO, an AM facility sans track record and big signal, country was a godsend. Making no apology for the approach, this was the station where country artists could hear their songs on the radio. How many others listened is harder to say.

WENO's owner was Cal Young, the white man who brought the first full-time black station to Nashville in 1951 when he signed on WSOK. After selling it in 1957, he started WENO. (WSOK became WVOL, famous outside Nashville for hiring a young local girl, Oprah Winfrey, to read news in 1971.)

Thanks to Young's ingenuity, WENO was seen, if not heard, by millions. Cal enhanced the station's visibility by obtaining decommissioned semi-trailers, painting "WENO," in big blue block letters on the sides, and hauling them to unsuspected places, generally hills and other vantage points, so drivers couldn't possibly miss the message. Whether he asked for permission, or begged for forgiveness, is beyond written history, but the sight is forever etched in the minds of older Nashvillians.

Trailers and radio are far from mutually exclusive. While few used them as Cal did, numerous owners found them to be suitable locations for housing their stations. Most were intractably grounded, however a few main

studios were very mobile. Too mobile, when it came to WHEL, a daytime-only AM outlet in New Albany, Indiana, across the river from Louisville, Kentucky. Since radio is a theatre of the mind affair, the state of its studios should be of little interest to anyone. The fact that WHEL was in a thinly disguised travel trailer complete with towing hitch, meant nothing to its listeners. But it was of major importance to the morning drive man around 1970 when he drove up to parking lot and discovered WHEL was missing. It took two days to locate it. Pranksters towed it off, and left it in the hills of nearby Floyds Knobs.

The only reason WKID-TV 51 in South Florida didn't fall victim to the same fate was it was live 24-hours a day. In the early 1970s, before cable television penetration, UHF channels had little impact in markets where the big networks were all on VHF. Commonly, UHF stations were frustratingly hard to pick up, and scarcely did they have programming worth seeing. No wonder Channel 51 was reduced to selling time to anyone who would buy it, including elderly tap dancers and an all-night movie host, who awarded passes to the local XXX theatres. Frugality was necessary, but it was nevertheless a surprise to in-studio guests when they found out, "in-studio" meant being inside an open storage locker, adjacent to the mobile van, which served as station's sole control room.

While studios can be makeshift, ground systems need to be meticulous. With AM antennas, most of the signal comes from what you see on the tower, but part also comes from copper radials buried in the ground surrounding it. And since AM is often directional, sometimes with very intricate patterns involving several towers to best cover a market, the ground system can involve a wide area. More than one owner has come up with a money making plan not run by their station's chief engineer. At least, you'd hope no one with knowledge would approve of selling the "vacant" land for trailer parks, condo

construction, and every signal-busting real estate scheme imaginable.

As AM waned in the 1980s, even towers were expendable. Some licensees accepted a miniscule signal emanating from a single stick, so a former multi-tower site could be sold. It was a much cheaper alternative to the costly engineering studies required for relocating a directional array, assuming a new location could be found. A few owners turned off the power and mailed their licenses back to the FCC, to reap windfall profits from the land on which the towers had been sitting. Jefferson Pilot, a North Carolina-based insurance firm, must have made good use of its actuarial projections when they signed off their entrenched Greensboro outlet, WBIG.

But long before that, AM owners were considerably more interested in increasing signal strength, or when it came to tunnels, having any signal at all. Far from today when everything is wired for anything, being underwater in the past meant being without radio. For short durations it mattered little, but for long underground links, like the mile-long distance between Detroit and Windsor, a ride through the tunnel lost a driver several minutes of listening, assuming no traffic, which was a bad assumption for the second busiest crossing between the two countries. Only the nearby Ambassador Bridge sees more vehicles per day than the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel.

From 1963 until 1970, when it no longer could avoid the Canadian government mandate forbidding foreign ownership of broadcast facilities, Windsor's CKLW was solely licensed to RKO General. As did all RKO stations, CKLW sounded like the big time Top 40 success it was. After its 1970 acquisition by a Canadian company, arguments on whether it was a Windsor station continued in Ontario. But on US grounds, CKLW was indisputably Detroit, heard everywhere except where no radio station had gone— the tunnel. It was irritating that in the car

capital of the world, there existed a major arterial where no car radio worked. Something had to be done about the tunnel.

Around 1973, it was. CKLW secured a contract to wire the mile-long link and engineer Ed Buterbaugh did what seemed impossible. When he was finished, *The Big 8* was not only, *"On your radio, in the tunnel,"* as their signs proclaimed, it was on everybody's radio in the tunnel, as no matter where your AM dial was pointed, CKLW was what you received.

Even for listeners on which the showmanship of that coverage coup was lost, it was impossible to ignore CKLW's dramatic news approach. Taking the frenetic urgency of Top 40 newscasts, a la McLendon and Storz, to new heights (or lows, depending on your perspective), more than any other station in the nation (or Canada), CKLW would be remembered for its news coverage. Story selection was irrelevant. What set CKLW apart from the crowd was verbiage: *'The Motor City Murder Meter clicked twice last night…'* and, *'More meat in the Michigan morgue…'* are recalled by every CKLW fan, but the creativity didn't stop at the news opens. When one unfortunate fellow fell down an elevator shaft in a well-known inner city building, the report resembled: *'John Smith entered the Penobscot Building, pressed the elevator for #31. The elevator went up, John did not. John was 34.'*

Imitators tried throughout the country, but no one could match the style of *The Big 8*. It could be argued that Detroit provided a lot of news from which to choose, but every town has its untoward side. When Evan Carl at country formatted WWOK in Miami wrote and delivered copy for sunny South Florida, you could almost hear the echo of CKLW in his ears. An infamous example was his coverage of a mob hit. When a gangster was murdered on his front lawn, Evan opened with: *"Mowed down while cutting the grass was…"*

Rodger Skinner missed the news about CKLW's engineering feat, but the concept was not lost on him. A radio junkie from his childhood in Pittsburgh, he rose up the ranks on the air. While listeners remember him as "Jolly Rodger" on WIRK in West Palm Beach, or John Paul Roberts on WQAM in Miami, it was Skinner's entrepreneurial spirit and electronic curiosity, which made him infamous. Ultimately his low power television ventures allowed for the kind of retirement funds unknown to most disc jockeys. But years before his forays into TV, Rodger was a certified low power expert.

Like Detroit, Fort Lauderdale boasts a tunnel. But if you blink, you'll miss it. It takes 22 seconds on average to get through The New River Tunnel, an underwater road, which replaced a small drawbridge in 1958. Perhaps that's why it never attracted much notice from anyone, much less broadcasters. But as Rodger had been engrossed in finding open frequencies on which to license new radio stations, a 22-second white space in the middle of a metropolitan area caught his interest. He saw it as the perfect place for an incessant loop of 10-second commercials. And as he was then doing well in radio sales, he knew how he'd market it.

First he had to find out who was in charge, so he could try to get permission for his scheme. That's a saga in itself as Rodger parked at the tube's entrance and excitedly rushed inside to the emergency phone, asking "*Who owns this tunnel?*" Fortunately the police did not mistake him for a drunk. They also did not answer his question. The buck stopped with the Florida Department of Transportation, and they were intrigued up in Tallahassee. Then he had to convince the FCC to grant him a license. Unlike Detroit, where CKLW would simply pump its signal across the AM dial, Rodger's Tunnel Radio was an original feed. At the time, he didn't realize that it would be easier to get approval, than to build something that would work. Eventually he succeeded at both.

Tunnel Radio was the perfect sales vehicle, pun intended. Being everywhere on the car radio dial, it was the only way to overcome a common objection from advertisers who didn't want to have to buy half a dozen stations to reach all their prospects. Here they could buy just one and get them all. Rodger's pitch worked. The commercial time was quickly sold out. In fairly short order, it was evident to the micro-sponsors that though motorists heard their quick messages, they didn't necessarily react to them. Ads began to dwindle, but not before many other tunnel operators, or those making deals with them, recognized Skinner's accomplishment, and paid him to do the same thing for their underwater venues.

Rodger profited from wiring tunnels along the east coast. And while there would be interesting tales about getting paid, his work was done once the installation was complete. Now tunnels are alive, and motorists have multiple choices beyond radio. But in Fort Lauderdale in the 1970s, Rodger Skinner knew a captive audience when he saw one. There was every reason for him not to succeed, which, no doubt, is why he did.

WNOP was nothing if not creative. The tiny Newport, Kentucky AM station, for years, sported a format of jazz and comedy with an attitude to match. In contrast to the school and business closings heard on major stations during snowstorms, morning man Leo Underhill served his audience by mentioning the all-important list of bars, which would not be open due to inclement weather.

There was little to gain, and less to lose, for the eclectic daytime-only facility, owned for years by a local beer distributor with a naval background and floating restaurant. That partly explains the guy's penchant for water. But not why he set WNOP to sea. In truth, it was the Ohio River, though it was no less bizarre. For all the glamorous images a floating studio might conjure, the reality was none of them. Rumor is, the licensee was most

interested in avoiding property taxes when he floated the station inside three oil tanks, transformed into a two-story studio known as *The Jazz Arc*. That "floated" part was hard on the records. Need it be mentioned, how heavy a turntable tone arm would have to be to avoid skipping in choppy waters?

The key to creativity is to come at a daunting situation from the perspective that it will not destroy you, that there are always other options, and that you will find them. Fortified with resolve, you'll naturally turn your attention from how you might flounder, to how many ways there are to succeed. And when all else fails, there's always the bag of dirty tricks.

Chapter 16
The Value of Creativity – Part Two
Dirty Tricks

Occasionally, circumstances indicate the necessity of digging deep into the proverbial bag of dirty tricks. Originating them is one thing, but responding takes the matter to another level entirely. WPTR in Albany, New York, went where no one had been before, at least not like this.

Few remember Duncan Mounsey. But given his creativity, the former general manager of WPTR should be up there with Storz and McLendon. With a background that included working at Radio City Music Hall, and friends such as Art Moger, press agent for the stars, or at least many major motion picture studios, Mounsey was well equipped when he was enraged. In 1961, he was livid.

Prior to that, WPTR had been #1. It was the first station to bring full-time Top 40 to the Capital District, in 1957. When upstart WTRY later signed on in Troy, it was no more than a nuisance. But when WTRY concocted a promotion, which put them on top of the ratings, Mounsey was motivated— particularly as the ascent was due to a coup that ensnared him.

Unbeknownst to Mounsey and everyone else, WTRY surreptitiously bought promotional liners saying, '*Ed Riley is coming*.' '*Watch for Ed Riley*.' The FCC would later clarify their rules, leaving no doubt that sponsorship must be properly disclosed. But the Commission was trying to protect the public through disclosure. In this case, it was WTRY's competitors, which needed protection, though it's hard to be sympathetic to any of them, since unmarked money did the talking, and nobody asked any questions.

Once the entire market was buzzing about Ed Riley and wondering who he was, WTRY put the matter to rest,

promoting him as their newest disc jockey. Mounsey's mind went into overdrive. Enlisting Moger's help, the duo concocted "Juan Fifero."

"The Great Juan," was a mentalist from Bolivia. He was actually WPTR's answer to Ed Riley— Dale Kemery, an incoming personality who would be Juan Fifero on the air. But the few who knew it were all were part of Mounsey's entourage.

To explain his blond hair, blue eyes, and excellent command of English, all contrary to the Incas in residence on the altiplano; Juan's background included being the son of missionaries, killed in a bloody uprising. Exactly how missionary and mentalist mixed was never broached. It was enough to get Dale to stop laughing when he said "Lake Titicaca."

Moger picked the locale because hardly anyone back then could find it on a map. The hope was that no one in the coverage area would be suspicious. To his marks, Moger was the most believable part of the story, due to his reputation of handling various over-the-top Hollywood entities. He played it as he would with any up and coming star, and the quick explanation about how he became aware of Juan's peculiar talent was never questioned.

The plan was for The Great Juan to make his American debut in Albany, for a "limited engagement," at the Thruway Motel. Never mind the implausibility of that. Capital District residents truly believed they had it going on to the point that it made sense to them that an international seer would make his stateside debut in their town, at the Thruway Motel, in The Imperial Room. The place was large enough to hold an event of that magnitude, and no one wondered how limited the engagement would be.

Moger did his job well. He crafted print ads, which made it seem that Juan would be on *The Jack Parr Show.* He had Albany believing this was a national event.

Newspaper columnists covered the coming of The Great Juan and his assistant "Catrina La Paz" (named after the country's capital, a farce that also slipped by everyone).

Moger bought time on five radio stations, including the only one that mattered to Mounsey: WTRY. The contract was very specific. To be paid for the massive amount of commercials each station would run prior to the appearance of Juan Fifero, they'd have to cover all of his opening speech in a live remote broadcast. It wasn't highly unusual language, so no one suspected it meant anything beyond their inability to cut away for commercials, sports or other programming.

It was somewhat risky to have The Great Juan and Miss La Paz come in a week early, however Moger considered the excitement he could generate and went for it. When the pair arrived by train, reporters were everywhere. It was the type of coverage reserved for royalty— or aliens. Juan, billed as *"The Youth from Out of the Beyond,"* was somewhere between the two.

As the week progressed, Juan made numerous public appearances, and a few private ones with Mounsey to discuss his upcoming radio show. In retrospect, that was not Mounsey's best call. Somehow the secret got out. But Moger was such a PR pro that no one bought the rumor Juan Fifero was the latest WPTR disc jockey. Compared to Moger's hype, all the stories sounded more like urban legends, and no one believed a one of them. Well, almost no one. The radio stations running the schedule put up their collective guard, but none were so foolish to forego the money they'd make from carrying the remote— at least not at first.

Mounsey had to act fast. He realized that the second the WPTR call letters were mentioned, he'd be off the air on competing stations. He quickly rewrote the speech so "WPTR" wouldn't be said too early. But the problem was Juan needed reading glasses, and Mounsey wouldn't hear

of it. ESP, Extra Sensory Perception, was all the rage back then. Though no one knew what to expect, they didn't expect Juan, dressed in something reminiscent of a bad Zorro outfit with a bolero hat, to be wearing glasses.

Promptly at 9 p.m., on Monday February 6th, Juan took to the stage. Considering he couldn't read the speech and there was no time to memorize it, it was better than it should have been: *'To you I seem a stranger but to me, I know every one of you intimately, each and every one of you…'* so far so good. Juan went on to explain that he firmly believed in ESP, because ESP meant *'Everyone Should Play.'* All you had to do was listen to your radio, *'to me Juan Fifero… One Five Four Oh, 15-40 on the right side of the dial, immediately switch your radio to WPTR and win with Juan!'*

As the line goes, *'I'll be here all week, try the veal.'* End of remote, no payment due, WPTR's call letters and dial position mentioned on WTRY, mission accomplished. Mounsey ran on stage throwing prizes into the delighted audience. Not that Juan Fifero was done. After his "limited engagement" at the motel, his daily radio show furthered the gimmick with all manner of winnings.

After a month, the act got old. "Juan" left WPTR for a station in Pennsylvania and returned to the air again as "Dale Kelly." WPTR's assistant program director became "The Great Juan" for a while. Eventually listeners forgot. None of WPTR's competitors did, but all were unable to respond. Anything they did would only further promote their rival, and after seeing 'no-mercy Mounsey' in retaliation mode once, it was enough to not ask for more.

By comparison to Duncan Mounsey, Miami's Dick Starr was congenial. In 1964, when WFUN came close to beating WQAM, it was a miracle in itself. Dick was WFUN's program director, and his talent greatly outdistanced the station's signal. But that didn't stop him from trying to trounce his higher-powered rival.

Starr's competitive stance so infuriated WQAM's general manager, he sent Dick a "Copy Cat Kit," with their jingles, stationary, and promotional announcements— narrated by mid-day disc jockey, Ted Clark. Starr rebutted by hiring Ted. (Legal action prevented it, and Clark went on to Detroit's WKNR.)

If WQAM hosted a concert, WFUN would be there with banners making it appear to be their own. WQAM had a series of locations they dubbed "Miami Bandstand," where their air staff and local acts would appear. WFUN countered with "Florida Bandstand," in nearby venues. (The real winners were the homegrown bands with never a shortage of gigs.)

But the one thing Starr couldn't combat was WQAM's ability to air "Beatles Exclusives." In 1964, if there was something more important than a Beatles record on Top 40 radio, Starr couldn't think of it. WQAM had the edge the old fashioned way. The program director had a friend in Great Britain who provided advance releases a few days before they were sent to other stations.

The one thing Dick knew for certain, based on his previous altercations, WQAM was a law and order kind of operation. He was able to capitalize on their rigidity, by having no similar reservations himself. Good thing, too, because it's a wonder how many laws he broke.

When WQAM went on their next "Beatles Exclusive," Starr sent them a cease and desist notice signed, "Capitol Records." He timed it so the telegram would arrive late on Friday, knowing it would be Monday before WQAM could check its accuracy. And sure enough, WQAM played it safe and pulled the offending product— which was played every hour, all weekend on WFUN.

Starr was also vexed by the large promotion budget of his rival. There was no way he could legitimately compete, though it almost seemed he could, after he and promotion ace Bob Harris happened upon several boxes of

plastic, which vaguely resembled the separators put on pizzas in transit to prevent them from being decimated by the box. No one was sure what they were, but being so multitudinous, Harris & Starr knew how they'd be used.

The on-air mentions glossed over the fact that what listeners would receive would be utterly worthless, or even what it was at all. The point was that there would be *'thousands of winners!'* The real prize was the priceless letter, which accompanied what was correctly described as a *"little white thing with four short prongs."* The booklet packed with Pet Rocks years later had nothing on this work.

Cliff Hall, Jr. shared Starr's enterprising spirit, but only when it was confined to his personal betterment. Hall was one of the most entertaining denizens ever to grace radio. With an air of dignity masking his jaded street smarts, Cliff managed to get all sorts of jobs for which he was, maybe, marginally qualified. He explained to anyone who asked, the reason was that he had *"office presence."* Cliff was reminiscent of the cartoon character *Top Cat,* and proof that the way you sat down in meetings, or got on and off planes (in the days when stairs were used), counted.

In the late 1950s, Cliff was a newsman at WQAM, and while quite good at what he was doing, absolutely not possessed of any reason to do any more than he had to do. Tired of the endless promotions that Top 40 stations required on-air staff to attend, and with no desire to partake in the mandatory Orange Bowl parade, he got an idea. He might have pulled it off had he not done it a day in advance.

Cliff "found" a dozen barricades and rented a backhoe, employing it late at night to conveniently shorten the parade route due to "construction." Little digging was needed. The barricades and their flashing lights were impressive. Unfortunately for Hall, his plan failed when the parade quickly devised a work around. But Cliff had

endless mirth watching what happened afterwards. As the City of Miami and Dade County were two very separate entities back then, remnants of Cliff's deed were visible for several weeks. The city said they didn't do it, the county insisted they didn't either. Both were right, but neither was willing to do anything to fix it for about a month.

Cliff was ever willing to enlist fellow staffers in his creative work-shirking ways, and happy to help them out in return, especially with broadcast remotes. Most guys would do something simple to the competition, perhaps pull the power plug, but that was too easy to restore. So when overnight personality Al Martinez grumbled to Cliff about the sleep he'd lose because he was scheduled for a daytime remote from a downtown window at Burdine's Sunshine Fashions Department Store, Hall knew what to do. He showed up, looking quite official in a Mary Carter Paint uniform with a bucket of black latex and a large roller. It took him less than five minutes to completely cover the window. Shortly afterwards, Al got up and went home to bed. The guys never came close to getting caught as their boss instantly assumed the unknown painter was the work of his cross-town nemesis. Cliff and Al chose to amplify rather than redirect that contention. The result was revenge in waiting.

While not necessarily completely harmless, radio retribution is indisputably amusing— though often it's the uneven battles that promote some of the farthest outside of the box thinking. When Joey Reynolds faced a well-healed competitor giving away five cars, he gave away five garages. Peanut whistle WFTL in Fort Lauderdale overshadowed bigger Miami competitors by holding an art competition where the winner would have their painting displayed at the Louvre. Only the fine print mentioned the precise location. At least the station was able to trade out a trip to Paris for the victor to see his masterpiece hanging in one of the museum bathrooms.

But the hyping of contests can go too far. And there are grave consequences from the FCC, should the commission decide a promotion is misleading. A few licenses have been lost, some fines have been instituted, and many letters of reprimand have been sent. But the FCC had nothing on an irate KLIF listener in Dallas who won more than the station intended to give away, after they unveiled the chance of having '*Your own desert island.*'

Lavishly produced promos told contestants they'd get lush greenery, multi-colored tropical fish, waves slapping the shores, a private swimming cove, and then some. What the winner got was an aquarium. What she really got was mad. The lawsuit she filed got her enough money to vacation on her own private island for a while.

Even with the best of intents, interactions with listeners are iffy propositions, as WLAC repeatedly learned. Constrained from the outright fraud heard on their Mexican counterparts, with 50,000 watts covering a third of the country, WLAC, *"way down south in Dixie,"* had no trouble filling their nighttime airwaves without elixirs and offers, indeed, too good to be true.

The Nashville station was the unexpected home of possibly the greatest rhythm and blues records heard anywhere in the country. Owned by the Life And Casualty Insurance Company, WLAC was no different than any respectable station in Tennessee during the day. But after dark in the '50s and '60s, the likes of John R., Hoss Allen, Gene Nobles, and other short timers, brought race music to places it had never been— an interesting dichotomy, since all the artists were black, and all the announcers were white.

To management, the commercials were green, the color of cash. Virtually all were live endorsements, often as entertaining as the music, occasionally too entertaining. It's ironic that it would be disc jockey Hugh Jarrett, also a member of Elvis' backup group, The Jordanaires, who

would hang for his double entendre, since everyone agreed Gene Nobles perfected the art. That the name of one of Gene's sponsors, Gruen Watches, rhymed with "screwing," was clearly not lost on Gene when he advised with a straight face: *'If you're girlfriend is mad atcha, give her a good Gruen!'*

Nobles had no end of fun with "*White Rose Petroleum Jelly*," embellishing their slug line, *"101 uses,"* with *"and you know what that one is for!"* If there was any doubt as to what that one *was* for, Jarrett settled it: *"Keep a jar in your glove box. You never know what might pop up."* That, too, might have passed muster had the FCC not heard about it.

It was a relief that most clients handled their own fulfillment. For some advertisers though, WLAC would be the repository for those cards and letters. Hoss Allen is forever remembered, shouting, *"Send your name and address, your name and address, to WLAC, Nashville, Tennessee,"* but with Hoss' southern drawl, it came out 'yuh name and ah-dress.' And that's what one woman from Ocala, Florida sent: her name and a dress. It was a flowered, print, A-line.

Frank Ward turned to the unusual out of absolute necessity. After a successful career in Top 40 radio, he found himself in charge of the sound of the Sonderling Stations, a handful of predominantly soul-formatted facilities, including New York's WWRL and D.C.'s WOL.

His initial task was to revitalize WOL, which was in direct competition with WOOK. Ward had no trouble getting the music right, no issue with the disc jockeys' patter, but the commercials on the station screamed "Loser!" In the mid-'60s, it was folly for him to think he'd replace what clientele he had. He knew that hairstyling products, cheap wine, food delicacies, and nightclubs were underwriting his salary, but the spots shouted cliché, and a lowbrow one, at that. He also knew he'd not be a one man civil rights movement, convincing major sponsors why they were wrong

to boycott the format, which many of them did.

WOOK was in the same boat, however that didn't lessen the frustration Ward felt when he listened to the market's leading stations, where even the commercials, with their singing jingles and big sound, added to the allure. Then it hit him: these sponsors might not pay to be on his station, but they probably wouldn't complain if they were there for free.

Ward did the unthinkable: he gave commercial time away— but only to the advertisers he felt would enhance the sound of his station. At first, it was hard to identify why Ward's stations sounded better. Over time it became less of a secret, but it was still unacceptable to the competition, to give away inventory.

Giving anything away was an anathema to the owner of WOOK, Richard Eaton. His creativity extended to directing a fan toward a tub with a block of ice in it, so that the warehouse studios for WSID in Baltimore would have air conditioning in summer. Word is, he docked the pay of a disc jockey, who had the temerity to slice his finger open on the blade while reaching for a record.

If there were kind words about Richard Eaton, nobody seems to remember them. Those who recall him at all are more apt to say, as one WOOK announcer did: *"He's running a damn plantation in downtown DC!"*

The FCC found Eaton's United Broadcasting unscrupulous enough to pull a couple of his licenses. Since WFAB in Miami was programmed in Spanish, it's hard to know exactly how *La Fabulosa* did itself in, but there was no mistaking what went on at WOOK.

Similar to many soul stations back in the day, WOOK underpaid its announcers. Some found additional income from an old favorite: the numbers racket. It happened chronically on such outlets, but principled owners stopped it quickly. Eaton was not one of them. The most oft used ploy was to disguise the mention of the

winning number of the day as a bible quotation. Verse 7, Chapter 13 would translate to 713. But when the daily number didn't correspond to any verse in anybody's bible, listeners eventually noticed. The FCC took exception, which is somewhat ironic as the government now sanctions the concept as "the lottery."

That Eaton was a miser is incontestable, though even if he wanted to give ads away, it would have been impossible. It was impossible for him to run the paid ones. So many were sold, often at ridiculously low prices, that Eaton had the records shortened to about a minute each. WOOK listeners would hear a song, followed by about nine commercials.

It's ironic that as ratings for WOL rose, the ads they did manage to sell brought in much more money than Eaton could have commanded. In the long run, the giveaway was both a sales and programming coup, made possible by Frank Ward creatively turning a negative into a positive.

Sometimes it's simply a matter of how you position your radio station. And every once in a while it's not about how you present it to the audience, but how you sell it to management. On those occasions, semantics might help.

For WDNC in Durham, North Carolina in the mid-1970s, it was not a problem to find African Americans. They comprised the majority of the city. The problem came in airing programming they'd appreciate, because station ownership wouldn't hear of it. The man in charge was a venerable, entrenched southerner, who was also the proud holder of the local newspaper. From economics alone, nothing in his experience told him that African Americans were a group to target.

The Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill metropolitan area was growing and diverse. It boasted five major universities including highly regarded Duke. It was also the state capitol, and the home of Research Triangle Park. But

WDNC, at 620 AM couldn't cover all that territory, especially after dark when it was a Durham-only station. The population for WDNC's nighttime signal was roughly 80% African American. Ignoring them would be insane.

Program director Joe Nuckols was turned down cold when he suggested the adult contemporary station go after African American listeners at night. Instead of giving up, he found another, albeit duplicitous, way around the objections. He knew the guy in control was a supporter of everything college. And he knew the kids attending those schools loved disco.

He also knew top management would be hard pressed to tell a disco favorite from an R&B hit. Frequently, they'd be one and the same, though not always. Joe felt absolutely no need to clarify the difference when he suggested the station become *Disco 620* at night. WDNC's owner went for it. Tee shirts were distributed with the station's new logo, and no one in charge ever suspected what was really being played. But for the first time, WDNC got nighttime ratings, and they did it by attracting an audience its licensees had no idea they were serving.

Creativity can make the positive difference, but when all else fails, it's perseverance that pulls you through.

Chapter 17
The Strength of Perseverance

When scanning the television news channels, as discussion turns to talk radio, the face you'll often see is that of Michael Harrison, publisher of what is called the bible of talk radio: *Talkers Magazine*. Few viewers could begin to imagine that Michael— now so closely associated with what is overwhelmingly a very conservative medium, has roots firmly planted in the counterculture of album rock music. His story is much less steeped in the ability to make what appears to be wholesale change, as it is proof of the strength of perseverance.

The consistency in Harrison's radio career is his ability to capitalize on the value of another medium: print. Early in his professional life, after becoming a successful personality and program director, he was one of the founders of *Radio & Records*; a newspaper, which quickly became radio's most respected publication. Michael served as its first album rock editor, coining the term for the format still in use today: AOR. With his own widely read publication, *Goodphone,* and a job programming one of the largest AOR stations in America, Harrison's image with the stance was cemented. Few knew or cared he'd hosted weekend talk shows on the FM facilities he led, but the experience came in handy. In the mid-'80s, talk was unquestionably the plan for the smaller market AM facility he purchased in Massachusetts. It wasn't long though, before Michael returned to his comfort zone of trade publishing.

In 1990, amid the widespread growth of talk radio, Harrison debuted *Talkers*. Initially, like any virgin venture, it was lacking in both large paid circulation and widely perceived credibility. What Michael faced in the first few years he produced the publication from a room in his home

with practically no outside help was enough to cause the rest of us to fold. Not only did some entrenched programmers and talents ignore his efforts, a few went as far as to dismiss the magazine as a vanity rag— a thinly disguised promotional vehicle for his undisclosed business interests. At the time, he probably would have welcomed business interests to promote. But whether such slams had any legs was superfluous to Michael's success. What mattered was not the criticism itself, but his reaction to it. He ignored it. Harrison's resolve would not be emotionally derailed— not by his detractors, nor the daunting nature of his task. Apart from content considerations, it's difficult and discouraging to attract advertisers to a fledgling paper.

Michael had the ultimate weapon in his tenacity. There's an old adage, if you tell a lie long enough it becomes the truth. That's not to imply Harrison was in the business of lying, although his new image as the go-to talk expert was as distant as one can get from his former AOR association. But time was his ally. With every reason to cash it in, he continued. After several years it happened— Harrison became the talk authority. Today his publication and related ventures are profitable, respected, and courted by many of the big names that previously derided his efforts. The industry sees Harrison as a smart, creative businessman. But few in it recognize the quality that turned his dreams into reality: his persistence.

The ability to stay the course, no matter what the obstacle, is rare. While there's nearly total agreement that persistence is a highly effective, desirable approach to most anything, very few of us can pull it off. The name at the top of radio's 'Persistence Hall of Fame' has to be Jerry Blavat. If anyone needs a solid "against all odds" illustration, Jerry is your man.

Born to a Jewish father and Sicilian mother in South Philadelphia, Jerry was a scrappy runt. While he excelled in school, his real education came from the streets. His

dad was a bookie, and his mother, though a highly principled disciplinarian who loved her children dearly, was only slightly removed from organized crime. Jerry's own unlawful activities began and ended at 13 when he impersonated a 14 year old to get on *Bob Horn's WFIL-TV Bandstand*— though unfounded rumors of mob ties plague him to this day.

It was on Bandstand that Jerry blossomed. Dancing was not his only skill. He was a born ringleader, influencing teens with ease. But his quick fame appeared to come to an end when Bob Horn was unceremoniously dumped from the show to make way for Dick Clark. Blavat was loyal to Horn and refused to remain on the air, picketing Clark's appearance until his arrest. That youthful display of defiance may have been his greatest blessing. Using the contacts he made from his stint on TV, it wasn't long before he was hosting his own record hops. Jerry's appearances supported him, his bride and daughter; and positioned him to transition to radio.

What started as a broadcast from a local nightclub, quickly became an in-studio show, through a quirk of fate and blinding snowstorm. The only way to have a more captive audience than listeners housebound during a blizzard would be to broadcast in prison. Blavat's audience, restrained by divine intervention, wasn't going anywhere— especially when they heard what he was playing.

It was easy for Jerry to call his own shots. He was buying the airtime on an obscure AM station owned by the city of Camden, New Jersey. That listeners found him at all was a miracle, but once they did, they were his. Being a fan of the R&B greats, particularly Jocko Henderson, *"The Ace From Space,"* Jerry decided he needed a handle. He chose *"The Geator With the Heator."* "Geator" was akin to 'gator or alligator. Critics mused he resembled one, but the association was more related to his habits. Alligators wait silently until their prey happens by. Then they snatch

them up in the same way that Jerry grabbed his unsuspecting audience. "Heater," because listeners would turn up his show, like they'd turn up a car heater, until it overwhelmed them. Alliteratively, alligator became "Geator" and heater became "Heator" (That's his explanation, and I'm sticking with it.)

As the Geator's popularity grew, so did the issue of payola. Clearly, Blavat wasn't involved. The tunes he played were recorded years earlier. Most of them never had been hits, and many of the artists were dead. The only way to get payola from these folks would have been to sue their estates, in the off-chance any existed. That didn't stop the mayor of Camden from banning anything on his station remotely reminding him of rock and roll. Overnight, and not of his own doing, Jerry was out of work and confused.

After awhile, the mayor relented and Jerry structured a better deal for himself. While he was off the air, offers came from market leading stations, which would have paid him a good salary, but he was unwilling to give up his independence. Though he created a successful persona, he well knew his real value came from the ear he developed for picking the right songs— songs that the big stations would never touch. His choices were so close to the R&B heard on the two soul outlets in town, it was natural for him to move to one of them. For a while, he was heard on both WHAT & WCAM with back to back shows. But combined, these facilities failed to remotely amass the kind of ratings mainstream WIBG enjoyed.

In the early 1960s, Jerry Blavat made radio history: heard solely on virtually unrated stations, his fan base surpassed his highest rated counterparts. The ratings that appealed to Jerry, a head count of how many paying teens showed up at his never-ending stream of dances, were huge. At the height of his fame, he used a helicopter to get from one appearance to another to do multiple gigs in the same night.

Ultimately, his proven ability to attract an audience led to a local television show. For over five years, the Geator owned Philadelphia's teenage television viewers. His program mixed Bandstand-like dancers with interviews of the biggest names in pop music. But as the decade came to a close, the times they were a changing. Villager skirts and Gant shirts were replaced with Nehru jackets and love beads. Jerry might have walked away for that reason alone, but the real lure for leaving when he did came from the lights of Hollywood.

Blavat made a lot of high powered friends and did a smattering of guest shots on network television shows, including a segment on *The Monkees*. Jerry played himself, and Davy Jones played a cross dresser in a memorable performance, which led to what Blavat thought was going to be his big break.

His role in a major motion picture was supposed to catapult Jerry to stardom, but it didn't work out that way. Though his acting was acceptable, the movie itself was far from major, and for the good of the careers of everyone involved, it never saw the light of day or the darkness of theatres. Just as Blavat was fired from WCAM for reasons that had nothing to do with him, it was happening again.

As for concrete plans beyond returning to Philadelphia, he had none— no television, no radio, and no teens who wanted to go to dances in 1970, assuming he had sufficient visibility to command an audience. To further complicate Jerry's life, his marriage was falling apart. In addition to his estranged wife, he had four young kids. If ever there was a description for down and out, this was it. But Jerry wasn't having any of that.

Blavat went back to what he knew, working at WCAM, hosting dances that were remnants of a decade earlier, even recording a song that managed to barely chart. Other disc jockeys may have viewed the lucrative offer he got from a progressive rock station to be their salvation.

Jerry turned it down flat. Although he wasn't sure how he'd return to his former stardom, he knew enough about himself to know it wouldn't be by playing underground music. It was an accurate self-assessment. Continuing to make marginal appearances, he agreed to host a few nights at a nightclub in Margate, New Jersey. He thought the upside would be a hotel room for the weekend, and $1,000 for two appearances. That turned out to be a minor benefit.

Blavat packed the joint. While his performances might have received lukewarm receptions in Philadelphia, the spirit of the shore caused vacationers to lap up what the Geator was selling. Eventually, Jerry bought the club. Today, the real estate alone would provide a hefty retirement for the 70-year-old legend who rebuilt his empire from scratch when anyone else would have walked away. It took decades of disappointment to return to his 1960s glory. Along the way, he had every opportunity to play the victim.

But Jerry routinely confounds his adversaries and astounds his supporters with his testament to tenacity. In addition to the garden-variety ups and downs on the climb back to solvency, not to mention fame, were things no one should have to expect: Being set up for a weapons charge, accused of serving liquor to minors, publicly and repeatedly investigated for an absurd variety of organized crime activities, even laughably being fingered as hiring a hit man to knock off rival Hy Lit, are among the specious attacks, which are all wholly unfounded. The volume of implications alone made Blavat worthy of his own leather-bound police blotter, yet nothing on it would have been true.

More painful were the behind-the-scenes betrayals. A long-time manager stealing his money when he most needed it, competitors capitalizing on the mob allegations to pressure employers to drop him, and partners selling his interest in the radio station he owned without notice or repayment of the loan he provided, are among too many

frustrations. He'd get his money back, but if Blavat didn't have reason to shoot a competitor, he plainly had reason to consider shooting himself, though it never crossed his mind any more than giving up could have occurred to him. As he always tells it: *"Never had a better day!"*

Today, Jerry is booked well in advance on Saturday nights for private parties throughout the Delaware Valley. He makes standing public appearances five nights a week, and is still heard on the radio, 50 years after he debuted. When fans discuss what makes the Geator viable after so long, they cite his music, his personality, and particularly how he relates intimately to them, his audience. Few understand the key to his long-term success is not any of that. It's a solid dose of knowing who he is, and the heaviest dollop of tenacity radio has ever witnessed.

Sean Compton was barely out of high school when he knew he had to be in broadcasting. Among radio geeks it's hardly unusual, though Sean's dedication to going after what he wanted belied his youth. Spending his days in the school library, he devoured every radio trade he could find, in addition to the radio sections in all the local papers, close to his Indiana hometown.

Based on what he read, he was singularly focused one company: Jacor Communications. He wanted a job, any job, but the guy in charge, about whom he'd read endless stories, would not return his phone calls— over a hundred of them. The rest of us would walk away and look for something else. When you're aiming for entry-level slots, they're plentiful. But Sean didn't want any of those. He wanted to be at Jacor, and he would not give up.

Sean dismisses his perseverance with the thought that he was simply too stupid to know it wouldn't work. That's probably not accurate as Sean is too driven to surrender regardless of the odds, though if it is a good portrayal, it's certainly not a singular scenario. Many of the world's most enviable entrepreneurs share common traits.

Among them is the admission that they were too dumb too know they couldn't succeed. It's a paradoxical truth: absent the naivety they lost along the way, they may not have ended up where they were.

But Sean was dumb like a fox. Evidence of his ability to intuit the right move, Sean wrangled a part-time job at WOWO in Fort Wayne. While the station was impressive, the logic behind his thinking was that the guy he was trying to reach at Jacor was a radio hound. Though he wouldn't return a call or listen to a tape of Sean's performance, the chances of him dialing around and catching him on WOWO, were strong. To help the odds, Compton repeatedly left messages about when to hear him.

It worked. Sean picked up the phone and the voice he so desperately wanted to hear, said *'I've been listening to your show and you aren't very good.'* Compton was unconcerned. His goal, as far back as his teens, was running radio stations, not being on them. As the two talked, the guy Sean tried so hard to reach was impressed with his industry knowledge— and moved by his love of AM radio, unique among kids who grew up in an FM world.

That got Compton in the door, but would hardly end his need to persevere. Navigating corporate waters is perilous for anyone, particularly a fast rising young star. Internal delays are more common than triumphs, and for the less patient, there are countless grounds to say *"I'm outta here!"* Sean had more than his share of reasons.

Along the way his tenacity saved him repeatedly. But what helped propel Sean above everyone else is his impressive deal-making knack. Praised by luminaries from Donald Trump to Ryan Seacrest, Compton brings people together, giving them what they want while getting what he needs. He's self-effacing as he professes not to be the brightest guy in the business. But if intelligence is measured in perception and persistence, no one can touch him. Currently, Sean is president of programming for

Tribune Television. His insight into people and the entertainment business, and his dedication to excellence make him a valuable commodity. But it's his perseverance, which put him in a place where he could use his talents.

Paramount's Kevin Gershan shares Compton's drive, but in his case, there were overwhelming reasons to drop his tenacious efforts— about a hundred thousand of them. His parents were hell-bent on having their oldest son become a lawyer. They had it all planned out. He'd graduate with honors from high school, they'd support him through UCLA's undergraduate and law schools, and once he aced the bar, he'd become a partner in his father's firm. At first, Kevin did his part.

But after obtaining a degree in film, Kevin had another plan. Working throughout college as a radio producer, it was a breeze to get his first television gig. He turned down his admission to law school. His parents were crushed— but not for long. The show on which Kevin worked was cancelled, and he was abruptly out of a job. When nothing materialized, it was the answer to his parents' dreams. Now they could force him to do what was best. Or so they thought.

Kevin knew what he wanted and was willing to pay the price to get it. He left no street un-walked looking for work. But the entertainment business is cliquey, and Kevin was a newcomer, so his contacts weren't yet vast enough to produce a position on his timetable— or anyone's timetable. Living at home with his folks, he was able to stretch out his savings, but eventually he ran out of money. That's when Kevin's parents felt they had him: Go to law school or get out of this house.

They never expected what was going to happen, but Kevin never expected it wouldn't. He moved into his car. His parents placated themselves by believing it would be a very brief experience. They were wrong. Weeks turned into months, months into a year before Kevin's dry-spell was

broken. That was 25 years ago. He's never been out of work since, though there have been moments when he wasn't sure what he'd be doing.

Kevin is a director on several of CBS Television's hit shows, and is guaranteed a healthy retirement through his union, the DGA. Given his parental pressure, it was harder for Kevin than many of us to persevere. But he never compromised on what he wanted, or doing whatever it took to get it. Apart from professional advancement, Kevin's biggest satisfaction is in knowing that it's been quite a while since anybody, particularly his parents, lamented his choice.

Along the path to success, downturns for any reason can be difficult to overcome, but when you're acutely aware that an unfortunate change of fate was entirely the result of your own actions, the regret that follows can be emotionally immobilizing.

That would have been Dodie Stevens' story, if she weren't so tenacious. At 13, the California girl had a big hit record and a bigger future ahead. Though *"Tan Shoes And Pink Shoe Laces"* had no sequel, it nevertheless catapulted her to numerous tours across the globe with the hottest musical acts of the time.

A few years later while still in her teens, Dodie left the stage to marry her childhood sweetheart. In that decision, she not only failed to consider the strongly-worded advice of every adult surrounding her, but with a heavy dose of irony, she somehow missed the ramifications of her new in-laws' religion. They were fundamental Christians, who left Los Angeles for a holier life in Missouri. Associating with the devil's music, or just about any music, was forbidden. Can you say: "death wish?" After several years Dodie said goodbye, and returned to 'I told you so' land. Divorced with a child, and though very young by most standards, Dodie had aged out of the rock and roll scene.

The rejection encountered by anyone trying to break into show business is tremendous. But the frustration with having once made it and not finding a way back would cause many people to become farmers. While Dodie's home in the densely populated San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles didn't lend itself to farming, it was nonetheless quite removed from the entertainment industry on the other side of town. But Dodie was too tenacious to consider anything other than music. Knocking on each door she could find, she managed to put her vocal chords to use as a session singer in every conceivable manner. The job that got her back on tour was singing harmony for Sergio Mendes.

It wasn't the same as headlining, but that proved to be one of its benefits. Dodie found unanticipated pleasure in the opportunity to enjoy all the benefits of touring without having to deal with any of the hassles of fame. After numerous supporting roles, from recording to performing with everyone from Frankie Avalon to Boz Scaggs, she spent a dozen years singing behind Mac Davis. These days, she's teaching music and back to the occasional appearance in oldies reviews with her earlier contemporaries.

Though none of her fellow performers made as monumental a judgment error as Dodie's, few equaled her ability to rely on music as her sole income. When looking for the defining difference between her career and others not as lucky, it comes down to perseverance.

For every "overnight sensation" debuting on any of the *Billboard* music charts, there are hundreds who took years to get there. Success can strike out of the blue, but it's more probable that it's the sweet (and yes, sometimes bittersweet) reward for not giving up. When fighters are going at it, the prize-winning victor might be nothing more than an average guy who is wholly committed to staying in the contest until he lands the final punch. Tenacity can be the winning difference in the game of life.

A lot's been said about recognizing the need for change, and as much about the importance of remaining on track, but the biggest wins come from combining the two: persistence that leads to greatness is more than continuing to do what you've always done, against all odds; it's the flexibility and commitment to doing whatever it takes to prevail.

But even the biggest resolve can be threatened when you can't begin to fathom what to do next. When you've run out of creativity, lost perspective, blown your composure, are surrounded by negativity, and can't find a path worthy of perseverance, that's when you need a little magic.

Chapter 18
The Gift Of Magic

Countless teens heard Wolfman Jack howl on the radio in the 1960s. Later, millions more witnessed him making all manner of verbal commotion on television and in the movies. But none ever saw him cry. It took a gesture from George Lucas for that.

In 1966, Jack was tired of the gunplay. He left XERF and the Mexican side of the border where he brought "The Wolfman" to life. Within a year, he bought an interest in XERB, near Tijuana. But this time, Jack had no plans to leave the United States. Because of the *Brinkley Act,* he couldn't transmit his signal out of the country, but there was nothing in that rule that wouldn't let him transport it—or at least tapes of it. He'd record a show in Los Angeles, and have it driven to the station to be played on the following night.

XERB, *The Mighty 1090,* blanketed the west coast. Every kid from California to Alaska heard the antics of The Wolfman after dark. By then, he had a physical persona to accompany his howl, though only the kids who showed up for his appearances ever saw it. That gave him plenty of time to perfect the look he hastily created when he was still at XERF.

Back in Del Rio, Jack received a letter from some college students in the Midwest, willing to pay to see The Wolfman. He almost blew it off, but always the hustler, Jack decided to go for a long shot. He named an outrageous price. They met it. He demanded it be paid in cash, delivered to his studios in $20 bills. They sent it. Then, he had to show up. He hired a makeup artist to transform him into a crude image of what you'd expect a wolf-man to be, complete with wig, cape, assorted stage props and, according to some reports, assorted midgets. If the kids

hired him because they wanted to know if he was Mexican, black, or white, they never found out. Given this get up, he could well have been lupine.

Mexican broadcasting was made for The Wolfman. Being streetwise, Jack understood who to pay, and how. But at XERB, it was even better. The station was a hoot and holler away from his new home in Los Angeles, a location offering no end of opportunities for his deal making, plus, he could lease the entire facility in an aboveboard deal— or at least as above board as it gets when interacting with entities south of the border.

Not only was The Wolfman bringing in the bucks from the offers he sold, which by the close of the decade included records on his own label featuring oldies compilations with royalties largely unquestioned (just as well, since the only thing more obscure than some of the R&B songs he included, were the identities of those who owned the rights)— but he also made a heavenly sum selling the rest of the broadcast day to preachers.

Until that good ole time religion caused his downfall, prayer cloth peddlers accounted for 60% of The Wolfman's overall revenue. But around 1971, with the stroke of a pen, faster than you could say *"Great God Almighty!"* the Mexican government made it illegal for the minions of the Lord to spread their message over the airwaves, at least not directly from stations domiciled in Mexico. Instantly, The Wolfman was out of work and into debt. Worse yet, while fans loved Jack's act, American broadcasters bought into it too, and were not willing to let their transmitters become the scene of the howl, not with licenses potentially in jeopardy.

It's nebulous as to why the federales targeted the God Squad, and mystifying as to how the new rule was rapidly reversed, but in short order, the preachers returned. By then, Jack's deal was done, and so was he. Though fans thought he was bigger than life, "Wolfman Jack" was the

icon of a hard working, ingenious, up from the ghetto, huckster. In selling the most outrageous schemes, Bob Smith sold the image he created. But it was absolutely worthless, if there was nowhere to hear it.

By 1972, The Wolfman wound up on a local Los Angeles outlet, KDAY, as an improbable part of an implausible AM progressive rock experiment. Grateful for the work, Jack snapped it up at a fraction of his former salary.

Having no inkling how he'd parlay this gig into anything, Wolf was willing to talk to a listener from his XERB days. The kid used to cruise the streets of Modesto listening to The Wolfman. As the signal wafted in and out as only distant AM stations can, it made the lupine howl seem almost ethereal, and left a lasting impression on young George Lucas, who decided to make a movie about it.

When Jack read the script, he wondered if he'd have to pay George for a role in his own autobiography. Instead, Lucas paid him a thousand bucks a day for three days work. Wolf needed the money. When it appeared the picture would be a big hit, Jack realized he should have negotiated a back end deal. Residuals would have been nice, but to his thinking, he didn't ask so he didn't deserve, and that, was that. No hustle, no gain.

Nothing in his hard-won experience could ever have prepared him for what happened next. Lucas called and gave The Wolfman a piece of the deal. Jack hung up the phone and cried. He had no clue the movie would be big enough to give him a lifetime of royalty checks. What was emotionally overwhelming was that this was magic. Jack was used to working hard for the littlest of things, and now for the first time in his life, he was getting something without scratching for it, and something big.

You're probably already on to the truth Jack couldn't see: he did work for it. He laid the foundation when he was howling to young cruising George. That's not to say truly

magical things can't happen completely out of the blue. It's not even to discount your guardian angels, fairy godmother, or whatever may be looking after your best interest from way, far away. Nor is it to demean the billions worldwide who are immersed in organized faiths. There's much to be said about the miraculous power of religion— and all of it is beyond the scope of this book.

But the most ardent traditionalists have much in common with those who embrace a more esoteric philosophy: in times of protracted dearth, we all want to believe we have a modicum of control over our lives— or at least a better hotline to the Lord's direction.

And therein lies the drawback to all manner of celestial help. We can't count on it, at least not on our terms. We generally can't communicate our wishes with ease. Prayer aside, from lengthy meditations, and contorted yoga stances, to the mandate that we think only of what we want without a hint of doubt, many of us give up. That's what Summer McStravick was ready to do.

Summer comes from a long line of intuitives, though when she was growing up, her family was just considered nuts. Her mother, Venus Andrecht, had not yet learned that her psychic abilities were a skill worth pursuing. Her grandmother was fond of throwing elaborate "mojos," which, while occasionally embarrassing when she outdid Wolfman Jack in flamboyance, tended to work, much to the amazement of her children, who soon after mom's spell-like dance, got whatever they wanted.

Summer was more pragmatic than her relatives. She took the art of believing seriously, and found it seriously lacking. She couldn't remain focused, couldn't keep the negativities away. On the best days it was boring, and on the worst, it was depressing. There had to be another way. Reading everything she could find from the past century, she came up with a plan, and called it *Flowdreaming.*

It combined the best of the philosophies Summer

encountered, along with common sense and ease of use. But the proof would come in whether it worked. It was better than she expected. Now she makes her living explaining it to others.

Her idea is deceptively simple. Don't worry about always thinking positively. Don't concern yourself with clearing your mind. Instead, spend a few minutes, a few times a day, daydreaming. All of us have drifted off with pleasant thoughts— of wealth, romance, or whatever rings our chimes, or maybe not pleasant, but definitely rewarding, thoughts— of one-upping a bad boss, perhaps. Too often though, we're caught up in dramas that are anything but satisfying. The crux of *Flowdreaming* is to not react, not even to act, but to "preact."

"Preacting" is similar to pretending, and most people will blow it off. But if you spend a few minutes in directed daydreaming, immersing yourself in the wonderful feeling, which springs forth from victory, you'll open a channel for what you want to come to you. It doesn't matter why it works, only that it does.

If you want a particular job, see yourself doing it. More importantly, experience how it would feel to have it. If you want a better relationship, immerse yourself in the feeling of it being so. If you can get to the point where you can manifest the emotion that naturally accompanies what you want, you're apt to get it. It may take a while but you'll have an immediate benefit each time you Flowdream: you'll feel refreshed, and ready to return to reality.

A hundred years before Summer happened on her answer, James Allen was in England writing about the same question— how to have the life you want. His second work, right after arrival of the 20th Century, *"As A Man Thinketh,"* concisely explains that we are what we think, that we become the content of our thoughts. Comparable to stoicism of old, and the cognitive therapists who would follow half a century later, Allen explains the route to

everything you want is found by directing your thinking: ignore what you don't want, embrace what you prefer.

In 1925, Florence Scovel Shinn came out with, *"The Game Of Life and How To Play It."* She contended that while many people find life to be a battle, it's actually a game. And those who understand its rules will win their heart's desire. Shinn's bottom line is, what you give, you receive. Beyond biblical morality is a practical application: your thoughts, your deeds, and in particular, your words and the feeling behind them, create their equivalents in your life.

As do other such thinkers, Shinn believes that for every demand, there is an unlimited supply, but most of us don't know how to obtain it. Our words and thoughts unwittingly keep our desires from us. Shinn focuses on how to redirect our energy, and why it works when we do.

But of all the tomes on that theme, arguably the best one came from an unexpected source— a television ads salesman. Around the time Wolfman Jack was going over his American Graffiti lines, the *Los Angeles Times* ran a full-page print advertisement for Joe Karbo's book. It said, *"Most people are too busy earning a living to make any money."* At first glance, this guide to materialism was the antithesis of spirituality. Even the title, *"The Lazy Man's Way To Riches,"* was not a thing that makes you go ohm. But it was cheap, and the ad copy was good.

The book was better. Karbo took the spiritual principals of visualization, belief, and emotion, and distilled them down to a method anyone could follow. Not only was he a living testimony to the results, those willing to try his method were amazed. It's the easiest plan to use when you're sure that the outré stuff is nonsense.

Louise Hay proved to many readers their thoughts manifest physically when she first wrote, *"Heal Your Body,"* in 1982. Her premise was every physical illness has its genesis in specific thinking. She spent years categorizing

what thinking brings forth which diseases. The connections she makes are uncanny.

There are hundreds, if not thousands of other books stating the same idea in different ways. Some of them are great reads. Fortunately for us who aren't sure what we believe about our futures or ourselves, belief is not crucial. Suspending disbelief is all that's required.

Currently, Jerry & Esther Hicks travel the world sharing the message of "Abraham," the name for a collective consciousness, which Esther channels. Regardless of who, what, or whether Abraham is, the message is reminiscent of the insight proffered by many others, including Shinn and McStravick: the law of non-resistance.

It's not the content of your thoughts, but the emotion behind them that matters. The angst from the endless analysis over how best to achieve your dream is what separates you from it. The feeling of self-satisfied peace from the knowledge that you're going to get what you want is what brings it to you— no unyielding all encompassing belief necessary. All you must do is ingrain the feeling accompanying such belief, and your dreams come true. It works because the universe doesn't know the difference between what you feel, and what you believe. Deepening the mystery, the universe doesn't know what you're feeling at all. As the theory goes, what the universe perceives is your vibratory essence. Your emotions are important because they're indicative, if not causative, of what that vibration is.

Assuming the foregoing is correct, and there's real world evidence to prove it beyond the words of long dead authors or disincarnate beings, then you need to harness your emotions. Controlling through force is out, and doing a fancy self-con job, inauspicious; at least not without a lot of hypnosis. Your best bet is to redirect your energy from one emotion to another. And nature will help you, as it's impossible to hold competing emotions simultaneously.

A frequent objection comes from those immersed in "reality," though everyone has had experiences, which negate that notion. It's a safe bet we all can remember a time when we felt on top of the world because we got a job we wanted, a date we wanted, or something we thought was wonderful. Our emotions were deliciously real. But if we were later disappointed by what followed, we generally felt lousy. Nothing we'd call "reality" changed. When we viewed an event with hope, we were exhilarated, and when we saw it as hopeless, we were depressed.

Common to all self-empowering modalities is the tenet that we are the architects of our own lives. While differences exist over how we do it, or how we should—that we do create our reality is sacrosanct. For those inclined to think such ideas are hogwash, those who are steeped in the philosophy that life is what happens *to* them, then by definition, they're not able to predict an outcome. And since there's no assurance things will turn out badly, how unreal is it to act as if they won't?

One of the most interesting facets about being corporeal— in a body on the earth plane, is our concept of time. Einstein proved that linear progression is a folly to the universe. But even the most mathematically illiterate among us understand the magic of life. In the blink of an eye, everything can change. It's not always for the good. Stories of carefree drivers awakening in bad shape after auto crashes, happen. But more often, it's… unemployed man wins lottery, lonely woman meets man of her dreams in the canned fruit aisle at Kroger, obscure disc jockey becomes national radio icon.

When Rush Limbaugh couldn't find radio work and was reduced to employment with a baseball team in Kansas City, where would the AM dial be today if he "knew" he had no broadcasting future? Broken timelines like Rush's are more common on winning resumes than those who reach the top and stay there. The "reality" is that while you may

not see anything in front of you, it doesn't mean it's not there. Repeatedly you'll read about the value of acting as if your dreams are certain to come true. No where will you find an argument for the benefit of feeling they won't.

Your ability to manifest winning emotions is more than being too dumb to know you can't succeed. It's being smart enough to realize anyone can.

Jarl Mohn never had a doubt. His resolve came from a difficult childhood where radio was his greatest escape. At 12, he landed in a children's home in Pennsylvania. Before that, he'd never paid much attention to what was on the air, but when Top 40 *Wibbage,* WIBG, was played throughout the facility, he was captured. He saw the future, and in it, he was a disc jockey.

Getting to where he wanted to be, involved a leap beyond most kids' imagination, particularly one who grew up in an orphanage. But not only could Mohn imagine it, he plotted a path. He knew directional stations needed licensed engineers, and like many of us, he realized that the requirement could be his ticket in. Taking on three part-time jobs, Jarl saved the meager money he made, and enrolled in a quickie-course guaranteed to get anyone certified.

With every reason to lament the present, he focused on the future, and at 15 years old, he was on the air at a suburban Philadelphia radio station. Before long, Mohn's resume included some legendary Top 40 call letters: WAMS in Wilmington, WIFE in Indianapolis, and WAKY in Louisville. His rising star didn't stop until he got to Y100, WHYI, in Ft. Lauderdale, where after four months he was fired for the first time in his young life.

Some say adversity defines us. More probable, it reveals us. How we handle disappointment unmasks our character. While such instances are telling about how we handle others, it's how we handle ourselves, which determines our trajectory. Initially Jarl was crushed. But

his on-air alter ego, "Lee Masters," was resolute he'd resurface.

He wound up back in Louisville, but instead of back on the #1 station, he was earning less money in a format he'd never done. Rather than bemoan his fate, Mohn immersed himself in the new experience. It ultimately led to his first jobs in management and ownership. From there he advanced to roles heading multi-billion dollar companies including MTV, VH1, and E! Entertainment Television. En route, he had his share of frustration and letdowns. Those stories would make a great book in themselves.

But what's relevant is Jarl's attitude. His mother claims his happy disposition has been with him since birth. Those who know him, nearly all agree he's a great boss, a natural leader, and a cherished mentor. Mohn admits he hasn't a clue as to why he's able to view life from a perennially positive perspective, though he's got a better grasp of why he became a success. He narrows it down to three things: crushing failure, dumb luck and delusions of grandeur.

If people aren't laughing at your goals, set them higher. Take it as a given, you'll fail along the way. What matters is how you rebound. And realize that luck is largely what you make it.

Jarl is no different from many high achievers in his optimism and determination, but what separates him from the crowd is his natural ability to handle tough people and situations. Coming from a background, which engendered self-doubt, Mohn emerged intact and confident. With nothing to prove to anyone, he approaches challenges from the perspective that everyone can win, and takes genuine delight when everyone does. He rises above those who seek to tear him down, or stew in their own negativity.

Part of it is natural, down to his DNA. But a lot of it is intent. For Jarl, grounding elements include daily meditation and exercise. Both allow him to detach and

refocus. Perhaps more than anyone else in broadcasting, Mohn is proof: as you think, your life will be.

Steven B. Williams was also a prime example of thoughts turning into things. But unfortunately, his tale has no happy ending. Unwittingly, Steven became Exhibit #1 in "Be careful what you wish for."

After a decade of making a big impression on Hawaii as a radio personality, Williams relocated to Denver in 1980, and became half of what many feel was the most memorable morning show in the market's history, *"Steven B. & The Hawk."* Steven was as creative as Don Hawkins, but off the air, he was the straight man of the pair, smoothing ruffled feathers and maintaining consistency.

When the duo split after topping the ratings for several years, there was no doubt Williams would do well. But that's not what happened. For all his discipline, he was quite naïve. Though the voice-over career he started in San Francisco amassed clients, he was an easy mark for anyone with a plan. Without exception, the end result was disappointment. Not that he had been a total stranger to letdowns, previously.

When Steven and Don Hawkins came up with commercials for their mega-conglomerate, "Whamco," a tongue in cheek part of the multinational, military-industrial complex, the results were hilarious. It was a no-brainer for *The Source*, a youth-oriented NBC radio network, to pick up and distribute the bits. But it was a complete mystery that anyone could mistake their insane products for real, or that a real mega-company with a similar name would sue them. Legal advice assured them victory, however before the pair could prevail, it became increasingly obvious that their opponent had the funds to bleed them dry, and the desire to do it. Good-bye Whamco. Good-bye NBC.

In the entertainment business, more than others, talent is necessary, but not sufficient. The magic currency

is connections. While 'who you know' won't usually get the less gifted where they want to go, it's the best conduit for those with the goods. Even when it appears fate has intervened, there's typically a back-story behind every lucky winner. The optimum insurance of success for those in radio is a lot of contacts. Steven had none. Other than his co-workers over the years, and a whole lot of listeners, Steven's list of who could do him good was barren.

When no jobs materialized, Williams widened his horizons and worked outside the industry, but nothing he tried replaced the love he felt for being on the radio. Increasingly his few close friends were concerned over his admission that he wanted to die.

Concern turned to worry when Steven made a new friend. The guy professed to be a fan from Denver, who became wealthy through shrewd investments. He and his never-present wife were planning to sail around the world, and he suggested Steven join them. It was convenient timing, as Williams had just inherited $2 million from the death of his father and had turned it over to this newcomer to invest.

Those close to Steven grumbled, only somewhat jokingly, that his associate would push him overboard and keep the cash. They were closer to the truth than they knew. Williams had shared with a few confidantes, if he didn't find happiness, he'd conveniently slip into the water.

It all seemed moot when repairs kept the vessel in dry dock for two years. By then, Steven found himself. He developed a real sense of direction, cancelled the trip and decided to retrieve his money.

Some have commented that cosmically, the die was cast, that it was too late to reverse years of asking the universe to let him go. The sad irony is Steven's death wish was fulfilled concurrent to his renewed reason to live. It's easy to dismiss supernatural forces, but looking solely at his alleged killer, all we know for sure is Steven B. Williams

was murdered on the night he planned to ask for his cash. His body was found floating off of Catalina Island. Radio lost a great entertainer. The world lost a good person. And I lost a true friend and confidante.

What the spiritually aware have professed for years, medical science is starting to embrace. Maybe our thoughts are not entirely confined to the brain. But doctors aren't focusing directly on spiritual issues. Their interest centers on an increasingly accepted phenomenon: cellular memory.

Ancients, including Aristotle, believed the heart was the seat of the mind. Doctors discarded the notion long ago. Today, a few scientists allow for the possibility of a heart-based, spiritual connection, but they generally confine their discussions to philosophy or religion. To assume a physical link or medical condition, to even hint at the possibility of the heart thinking independently, is generally viewed as being somewhere between malpractice and lunacy.

But as it is becoming more common to talk about such things, a pattern has emerged. Particularly with heart transplants, proclivities from the donor pass to the recipient. Whether it's the love of a formerly hated food, or a complete personality transformation favoring the heart's previous owner— growing reports from patients confirm it happens. If not yet openly accepted, a lot of quiet study is going on.

Over a decade ago, Paul Pearsall wrote *"The Heart's Code."* Beyond chronicling the mind-blowing coincidences involved in transplantation cases, he explored the role our thinking plays on our hearts, and put forth the idea that the heart has a thought-pattern all its own.

Similar to the difference between active and passive thinking, the intelligence of the brain is the counterpoint to the wisdom of the heart. The mind analyzes, but the heart understands. Because we are so focused on the ideas

coming from our brains, we mask the instincts radiating from our hearts. In so doing, we often lose our connectedness to what really matters to us, and in its most extreme, our connection to the life we're living.

Life's magic is not about the isolated chance of a miracle. It's in knowing that everyone of us has everything we need to create our own miracles, anytime we choose. You say, 'if only it were that easy.' And that's the real miracle. It is. It's as easy or difficult as you make it.

Being able to spend my life in radio was partly a gift from above, and mostly a miracle of my own making. While I didn't know how I'd get there, I never doubted where I was going. But even if it hadn't made it, radio would have forever been my greatest inspiration. In 1989, Bruce Kamen, my boss at KOA in Denver, asked if I'd write a testimonial for the National Association of Broadcasters' campaign, *"Radio, what would life be without it?"* I was able to do it off the top of my head:

When I was growing up, radio saved my life— no, it was my life— the only thing that really made a difference. I'd wake up with it, and carry a radio around like a security blanket, all day long. One teacher mistook my earphone for a hearing aid. I got a lot of sympathy, not to mention plenty of exposure to the local Top 40 giant. But late at night, when that Zenith transistor played softly under my pillow, radio was magic! Through 50,000 watt clear channels it took me everywhere: to the glitter of Nashville, the excitement of New York, the lure of Cincinnati. Heck, at three in the morning, radio even made Little Rock sound like the big time.

More than any other compliment I've been given, I hear, *"You're the most intelligent person I know."* It always makes me laugh, not only as I'm at the other end of the scale emotionally, but that I'm a walking contradiction. I'm great at business and legal matters, I know every nuance of psychology, especially that of others. But if you'd view me in action for a while, you'd see that I live like a nine year old

whose parents are away for the weekend. I know French fries are a vegetable, and popsicles are a fruit, but you still want to keep me out of the kitchen, lest you have to call the fire department— again. Laundry poses its own challenges. Thankfully, my husband, Jon, is a saint.

I remain a hard-core radio enthusiast, though the excitement and wonder are now past tense. Most of what I want to hear is long gone. I changed, but more so, did radio. Yet, the discussions about whether radio is dead are misguided. Just as broadcasters talked about the medium's demise when television arrived, and managers discussed the fate of AM when FM began to dominate; it's irrelevant, because radio is only the delivery truck.

When you order something online and it reaches your door, do you marvel over the truck that brought it? Are you worried about the outside of the box containing it? Unless there's something clinical going on with you, the only thing of consequence is what's inside. In the same way, it's not radio itself that was magical back in the day. It was what was on it. Whether on AM, or FM, or, more recently, satellite or an Internet stream; as long as the listener can hear it, it's the content that makes it compelling.

It's doubtful the conditions, which produced the kind of radio that captured me, will ever return. But it's a given, creativity will always be available in some form. Like everyone looking for "the next Elvis" who unwittingly found it a few years later in "The Beatles," the next big radio hit after Rush Limbaugh will be equally divergent. Programmers seeking to clone Rush will be no closer to real success than were the Elvis imitators of 50 years ago.

These days I joke when listeners tell me that they want to go into radio, "*Do something less messy, maybe animal husbandry— or more exciting, perhaps becoming an actuary.*" But for those truly infected, there is no choice. You don't get into radio, radio gets into you.

In thinking back on a very different industry, a very long time ago, I recognize how lucky I was to be a part of it. Often, I'm pressed to write my personal story. But in mulling it over, I've come to realize that the old line used by disc jockeys when young fans proclaimed they wanted to be in radio when they grew up, probably sums up all you need to know about me— *"Sorry kid, you can't do both."*

Bibliography & Resources

Chapter 1:
Otis, Clyde & Burton, Dorian; 1968. *"Till I Can't Take It Anymore,"* The Clyde Otis Music Group, Inc. BMI (Andra Willis rendition)

Chapter 2:
Maltz, Milton, M.D., F.I.C.S., 1960. *"Psycho-Cybernetics,"* Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Maltz, Milton, M.D., F.I.C.S., 1955. *"Adventures in Staying Young,"* Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

Meador, Clifton K. M.D., 2005. *"Symptoms Of Unknown Origin: A Medical Odyssey,"* Vanderbilt University Press

Cannon, Walter B. M.D., *"Voodoo Death,"* American Anthropologist: April-June 1942, Vol. 44 No. 2 (Public Domain)

Mehta, Gita, 1979. *"Karma Cola,"* Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Chapter 3:
Lee, Alvin, 1979. *"Ride On Cowboy,"* Space Songs, Ltd. ASCAP

Chapter 6:
Andrecht, Venus. www.godisalwayshappy.com

Chapter 7:
Hernacki, Mike, 1982. *"The Ultimate Secret To Getting Absolutely Everything You Want."*

Werthmann, Kitty. *"Don't Let Freedom Slip Away."* (Available online at various sites – use any search engine.)

Chapter 9:
Ellis, Albert, Ph.D., 1955. *"Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy."* www.rebt.org

Beck, Aaron, M.D., *"CBT: Cognitive Behavior Therapy."* www.beckinstitute.org

Burns, David, M.D., 1980. *"Feeling Good,"* William Morrow & Co.

Keyes, Ken Jr., 1987. *"Your Life Is A Gift,"* Living Love Publications

Maslow, A. H., Ph.D., *"A theory of human motivation."* Psychological Review Vo. 50(4) July 1943 370-396 (Public Domain)

Carlson, Richard & Bailey, Joseph, M.A., 1997 *"Slowing Down to the Speed of Life,"* HarperCollins www.joebaileyandassociates.com

Chapter 10:
Welles, H.G., 1895. *"The Time Machine"* Heinemann (Public Domain)

Chapter 11:
Clinton, G., Thomas, G., Lewis, P., 1967. *"Don't Be Sore At Me,"* Groovesville Music BMI

Chapter 13:
Rook, John www.hitparadehalloffame.com

Chapter 14:
Sorkin, Dan. Stumps 'R Us www.stumps.org

Chapter 18:
McStravick, Summer. www.flowdreaming.com

Allen, James, *"As A Man Thinketh."* 1904 (Public Domain.) Nice translation to modern language by Marc Allen, 1987: "As You Think." Whatever Publishing, Inc.

Shinn, Florence Scovel, 1925. *"The Game of Life & How To Play It."* (Public Domain.) Four books by Shinn including *"The Game Of Life"* are in *"The Wisdom of Florence Scovel Shinn"* 1989 Fireside.

Karbo, Joe, 1973. *"The Lazy Man's Way To Riches."* Currently available through F.P. Publishing, Inc. www.thelazymansway.com

Hay, Louise L., 1978. *"Heal Your Body."* Hay House, Inc. (The latest update is *"Heal Your Body A-Z,"* 1998. Hay House, Inc.) www.hayhouse.com

Hicks, Esther & Jerry, 2004. (The Teachings of Abraham) *"Ask and It Is Given."* Hay House, Inc. www.abraham-hicks.com

Pearsall, Paul Ph.D., 1998. *"The Heart's Code."* Broadway Books

And here are a few more things you might like— it's impossible to compile a comprehensive list but these might get you started on a list of your own:

Metaphysical:
Roberts, Jane, 1972. *"Seth Speaks,"* Prentice-Hall. (The first widely read book allegedly dictated from the beyond.)

St. Clair, David, 1978. *"David St. Clair's Lessons in Instant ESP,"* Prentice-Hall. (He died before the ESP movement really took off or he'd be a household name with this gem.)

Sherman, Harold, 1935. *"How to lose your fears and find Your Key To Happiness,"* G. P. Putnam's Sons; 1944 Reprint, Fawcett. (ESP investigation didn't start with Sherman but he's a good representative of the earlier movement.)

Co-Dependence: (Good reads for anyone with difficult childhoods.)
Mellody, Pia; with Miller, Andrea Wells & Miller, J. Keith, 1989. *"Facing Codependence: What it is, Where it comes from, How it sabotages our lives."* Harper & Row.

Woititz, Janet G. Ed.D, 1989. *"The Self-Sabotage Syndrome,"* Health Communications, Inc.

Smith, Ann W, 1990 *"Overcoming Perfectionism,"* Health Communications, Inc.

Mallinger, Allan E., M.D., & DeWyze Jeannette, 1992 *"Too Perfect, When Being In Control Gets Out of Control,"* A Fawcett Columbine Book, Ballantine Books.

Anger & Frustration:
Hauck, Paul A., 1974. *"Overcoming Frustration and Anger,"* Westminster Press.

DeFoore, Bill, Ph.D., 1991 *"Anger: Deal with it, Heal with it, Stop it from Killing You,"* Health Communications, Inc.

Grant, Wendy, 1997. *"Resolving Conflicts: How to turn Conflict into Cooperation,"* Element Books.

Regrets:
Freeman, Arthur Ph.D., DeWolf Rose, 1989. *"Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda: Overcoming Regrets, Mistakes and Missed Opportunities,"* William Morrow & Company.

Chaos:
Culp, Stephanie, 1991. *"Streamlining Your Life: A five point plan for uncomplicated living,"* Writers Digest Books

McEwan, Elaine, 1997. *"Managing Attention & Learning Disorders,"* Harold Shaw Publishers.

Levinson, Steve Ph.D, Greider, Pete C. MEd. 1998. *"Following Through: A Revolutionary New model for Finishing Whatever You Start,"* Kensington Books.

Choices & Goals:
Leider, Richard J. 1985. *"The Power of Purpose,"* Fawcett Gold, Ballantine Books.

Helmstetter, Shad, 1989. *"Choices,"* Pocket Books, Simon & Schuster, Inc.

McWilliams, Peter & John-Roger, 1988. *"You Can't Afford The Luxury of a Negative Thought,"* Prelude Press. (Peter McWilliams was a walking soap opera but while he couldn't find his own happiness, his thinking has helped the rest of us.)

Self-Assessment:
Bradberry, Travis Ph.D, Greaves, Jean, Ph.D., 2003 by TalentSmart. *"The Emotional Intelligence Quick Book,"* Fireside Books, Simon & Schuster, Inc.

www.Rollye.net

Rollye James has been on the radio since the 1960s, playing records, reading news, creating commercials and, for the past three decades, hosting talk radio shows. Named the personality "*Most Likely To Make Rush Limbaugh Sound Rational,"* by Philadelphia's *City Paper,* in 1998, Rollye's actually a dedicated libertarian who sees the major parties as "republicrats" and "demopublicans."

After topping the ratings in Philadelphia, San Diego and Denver, *The Rollye James Show* was syndicated for several years to affiliates across America including four 50,000 watt stations. Rollye is currently heard exclusively in the US on XM Satellite Radio, worldwide on shortwave and online at www.rollye.net.

Rollye has also worked for Storz Broadcasting, *Billboard Magazine*, Capital Cities Communications, Jacor, Infinity, Greater Media, Fairbanks, Watermark, CBS, Epic Records, entertainer Charlie Rich, and others. She continues to head Mediatrix, the multi-media company she founded in 1980.

Dubbed by her audience as *"the empress of the interstates,"* Rollye has driven every mile of the US Interstate System. *"I've completed it,"* she boasts, *"which is more than the federal government has done."* Her passion is for obscure R&B oldies, particularly Northern Soul, Beach Music and East LA Low Rider classics.