



13 STORIES THAT LEAD YOU TO LIVE THE GOOD LIFE

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THE STARFISH STORY

*Adapted from **The Star Thrower**, by Loren Eiseley*

Once upon a time, there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man, and that what he was doing was not dancing at all. The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up small objects, and throwing them into the ocean.

He came closer still and called out "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young man paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean."

"I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the somewhat startled wise man.

To this, the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."

Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"

At this, the young man bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, he said, "I made a difference to that one!"

THE DASH

Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak
At the funeral of a friend

He referred to the dates on her tombstone
From the beginning to the end

He noted that first came her date of her birth
And spoke the following date with tears,

But he said what mattered most of all
Was the dash between those years

For that dash represents all the time
That she spent alive on earth.

And now only those who loved her
Know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own;
The cars, the house, the cash,

What matters is how we live and love
And how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard.
Are there things you'd like to change?

For you never know how much time is left,
That can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
To consider what's true and real

And always try to understand
The way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger,
And show appreciation more

And love the people in our lives
Like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect,
And more often wear a smile

Remembering that this special dash
Might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read
With your life's actions to rehash

Would you be proud of the things they say
About how you spent your dash?



LESSONS FROM GEESE

Unknown

Geese migrate every Fall and Spring. Their migration is an awesome sight. Geese have developed a strong interdependence that enables them to make the long journey successful.

Here are the five lessons we can learn from geese:

LESSON 1: The Importance of Achieving Goals

As each goose flaps its wings it creates an UPLIFT for the birds that follow. By flying in a 'V' formation the whole flock adds 71 percent extra to the flying range. When we have a sense of community and focus, we create trust and can help each other to achieve our goals.

LESSON 2: The Importance of Team Work

When a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back to take advantage of the lifting power of the birds in front. If we had as much sense as geese we would stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

LESSON 3: The Importance of Sharing

When a goose tires of flying up front it drops back into formation and another goose flies to the point position. It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks. We should respect and protect each other's unique arrangement of skills, capabilities, talents and resources.

LESSON 4: The Importance of Empathy and Understanding

When a goose gets sick, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to the ground to help and protect it. If we have as much sense as geese we will stand by each other in difficult times, as well as when we are strong.

LESSON 5: The Importance of Encouragement

Geese flying in formation 'HONK' to encourage those up front to keep up with their speed. We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups and teams where there is encouragement, production is much greater. Individual empowerment results from quality honking

PHENOMENAL WOMEN

Maya Angelou

Pretty women wonder where my secret
lies.

I'm not cute or built to suit
a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.

I say,
It's in the reach of my arms
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.

I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them
They say they still can't see.

I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.

I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need of my care,
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.



A SLOW BOILED FROG

Unknown

The premise is that if a frog is placed in boiling water, it will jump out, but if it is placed in cold water that is slowly heated, it will not perceive the danger and will be cooked to death. The story is often used as a metaphor for the inability of people to react to significant changes that occur gradually.

- As a stay at home parent... you might not have lost focus on what you would like to do when you re-join the workforce. What skills do you need and what do you need to do to prepare?
- As an employee... you might not have kept up to date with your industry so your skills are obsolete. Your drive and motivation to succeed and innovate has dwindled.
- As a spouse... you might have focused too much on your kids and not enough on your relationship with the father or mother of your children. You can't remember the last date night!
- As a friend... you might not have searched deep inside and asked what you are looking to give and receive as a friend and you are left with someone who does not value you as a person.
- As a legacy producer... you might not have considered what you want to be remembered for and your life might feel empty and lacking purpose.

If this sounds like you, wake up and get out of the pot before you come to a boil. It's never too late to start fresh and search for what it is you are looking to achieve in love and in life. Take daily action and the temperature will soon drop, and you will experience a new outlook on life!

The sooner you embrace change the sooner you embrace life!



THE SHINE ON! CREED

Molly Nece

DREAM...

The sky is not the limit. It is just the beginning.
Shoot for the moon. Play among the stars!
The choice is yours to explore. Discover who you want to become.
What you believe and what you say is what you will create.
It's your dream... your reality. Go chase it!
Be brighter and let your whole self shine!

PLAN...

We all won the lottery of life. It's up to you how to spend it.
Hope for the best and plan for your greatness!
Minimizing is truly maximizing. It's all how you look at it.
When you fail today, you will win tomorrow.
Visualize your success. It's waiting for you right around the corner.

PERSIST...

Life is an adventure. You got to live it to love it!
Just don't think it, DO IT!
One more 'no' gets you that much closer to 'YES!'
You are only brave when you do the things that scare you.
The unknown becomes fun when you get used to exploring it.
Drive fearlessly towards your goals and grab hold of your confidence
Be driven in the direction of your dreams!

ACHIEVE...

Every day is a holiday when you choose to see it that way.
You get what you give and your heart lets you live!
The time is now. Make a difference. Be the difference.
Share what you know because that is how we grow.

THRIVE...

You have been given the potential to thrive 365 days a year.
Dream BIG, shine BRIGHT, and create your best life.
It's a simple choice... **SHINE ON!**



FISH FOR A LIFETIME

Unknown

“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; show him how to catch fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.”

MEANING...

A proverbial saying which suggests that the ability to work is of greater benefit than a one-off handout.

ORIGIN...

To contrary belief, this quote does not have a Chinese origin; however, various US magazines from the 1960s sited it as such. The expression actually originated in Britain in the mid 19th century. Anne Isabella Ritchie, the daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray, wrote a story entitled *Mrs. Dymond*, sometime in the 1880s and it includes this line. *“He certainly doesn't practice his precepts, but I suppose the patron meant that if you give a man a fish he is hungry again in an hour; if you teach him to catch a fish you do him a good turn.”*

PURPOSE...

So often we do things for others because it is easier to do it ourselves. I've learned that if we continue to do things ourselves without teaching others, we have the potential of burning ourselves out and not giving others the opportunity to uncover their own potential. It might take longer at first to teach someone something new, but over time, that person has actually provided more and took less from you, your organization, and the world. Look outside yourself to help others help themselves.



THE ABILENE PARADOX

Jerry Harvey

The Abilene paradox is a paradox in which a group of people collectively decide on a course of action that is counter to the preferences of any of the individuals in the group. It involves a common breakdown of group communication in which each member mistakenly believes that their own preferences are counter to the group's, and therefore, does not raise objections. A common phrase relating to the Abilene paradox is a desire to not "rock the boat."

The Abilene paradox was introduced by management expert Jerry Harvey in his article *The Abilene Paradox: The Management of Agreement*. The name of the phenomenon comes from an anecdote in the article which Harvey uses to explain the paradox:

On a hot afternoon visiting in Coleman, Texas, the family is comfortably playing dominoes on a porch, until the father-in-law suggests that they take a trip to Abilene [53 miles north] for dinner. The wife says, "Sounds like a great idea." The husband, despite having reservations because the drive is long and hot, thinks that his preferences must be out-of-step with the group and says, "Sounds good to me. I just hope your mother wants to go." The mother-in-law then says, "Of course I want to go. I haven't been to Abilene in a long time."

The drive is hot, dusty, and long. When they arrive at the cafeteria, the food is as bad as the drive. They arrive back home four hours later, exhausted.

One of them dishonestly says, "It was a great trip, wasn't it?" The mother-in-law says that, actually, she would rather have stayed home, but went along since the other three were so enthusiastic. The husband says, "I wasn't delighted to be doing what we were doing. I only went to satisfy the rest of you." The wife says, "I just went along to keep you happy. I would have had to be crazy to want to go out in the heat like that." The father-in-law then says that he only suggested it because he thought the others might be bored.

The group sits back, perplexed that they together decided to take a trip which none of them wanted. They each would have preferred to sit comfortably, but did not admit to it when they still had time to enjoy the afternoon.

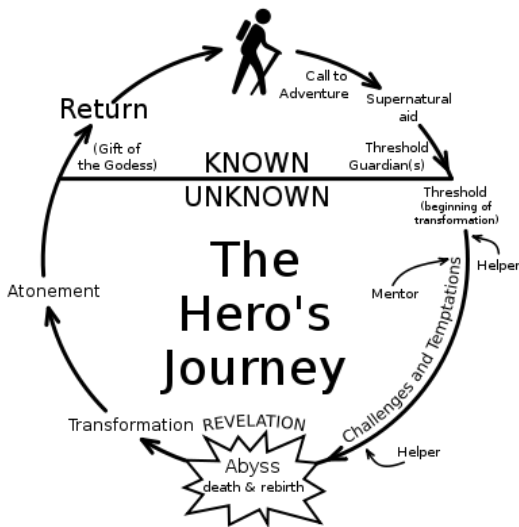
While studying for my Masters in Training and Organizational Development, Dr. Jack Orr shared this theory to help explain how poor business decisions are made—especially the notion of "rule by committee." When working in teams, be sure to ask one another, "Are we going to Abilene?" to determine whether the decision is legitimately what people desire or merely a result of groupthink!

Take a stand and boycott group think. Although, not always the most favorable stand, *people will thank you!* If you are not careful, group think can kill creativity, possibilities, and happiness. *Don't let it happen to you!*

A HERO'S JOURNEY

Joseph Campbell

This story was another "ah ha" moment of inspiration that has equipped me to journey into the unknown and return stronger and wiser. *Thanks for sharing your wisdom with me, Dr. Orr!*



STAGE ONE: DEPARTURE

- **The Call to Adventure**
The call to adventure is the point in a person's life when they are first given notice that everything is going to change, whether they know it or not.
- **Refusal of the Call**
Often when the call is given, the future hero refuses to heed it. This may be from a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy, or any of a range of reasons that work to hold the person in his or her current circumstances.
- **The Crossing of the First Threshold**
This is the point where the person actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known limits of his or her world and venturing into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are not known.

STAGE TWO: INITIATION

- **The Road of Trials**
The road of trials is a series of tests, tasks, or ordeals that the person must undergo to begin the transformation. Often the person fails one or more of these tests, which often occur in threes.
- **Tempters and Guardians**
In this world there are people and situations that can help you succeed or take you off your charge. The person needs to keep aware, identify and strengthen relationships with their guardians and weaken the powers of their tempters.
- **Atonement with the Father**
In this step the person must confront and be initiated by whatever holds the ultimate power in his or her life. This is the center point of the journey. All the previous steps have been moving in to this place, all that follow will move out from it.
- **The Ultimate Boon**
The ultimate boon is the achievement of the goal of the quest. It is what the person went on the journey to get. All the previous steps serve to prepare and purify the person for this step.

STAGE THREE: RETURN

- **The Magic Flight**
Sometimes the hero must escape with the boon. It can be just as adventurous and dangerous returning from the journey as it was to go on it.
- **The Crossing of the Return Threshold**
The trick in returning is to retain the wisdom gained on the quest, to integrate that wisdom into a human life, and then maybe figure out how to share the wisdom with the rest of the world. This is usually extremely difficult.
- **Freedom to Live**
Mastery leads to freedom from the fear of death, which in turn is the freedom to live. This is sometimes referred to as living in the moment, neither anticipating the future nor regretting the past.



BE THE DONKEY

Molly Nece

Once upon a time, there was a donkey that fell into a deep well. The farmer jumped off his tractor and ran quickly towards the loud “hee-haw” sounds coming from across the field.

RULE ONE: Be consistent by hee-hawing onto others as you would have them hee-haw onto you.

When he gazed into the well, he saw his lifelong companion’s eyes staring up at him in fear. The farmer felt there was only one thing he could do—put his hardworking donkey out of his misery! The farmer ran back to his house to grab his shotgun. When he returned to the well, he couldn’t bring himself to doing such an awful task.

RULE TWO: Remain focused on your values and intention.

Instead, the farmer told all his neighbors to bring their shovels and meet him at the well.

RULE THREE: Labor daily and don’t be afraid to get dirty.

Everyone began to throw shovel full of dirt, after shovel full of dirt on top of the donkey’s back. The donkey went into hysterics. Suddenly the donkey stopped “hee-hawing” and decided to shake it off.

RULE FOUR: Endure hardship, face the dirt and shake it off.

The donkey noticed that when he shook off the dirt, he was able to step it up.

RULE FIVE: Step up your success.

Ah ha! At that moment, he realized that this was not the end. It was only the beginning.

RULE SIX: Show strength, grab hold of your vision, and never let go.

Before long, the donkey was able to walk safely and swiftly out of the well and spend the rest of his years with his trusty companion—the farmer.

RULE SEVEN: Teach old farmers new tricks.

In life we’re often faced with dirt. Some dirt we throw on our own backs, while other times we allow others to place it upon us. Nevertheless, it is how we choose to face the dirt. As the old adage goes, we reap what we sow, but sometimes it comes from the most unlikely places.

If we read between the lines, “Be the Donkey” talks about change, relationships, values, leadership, and endurance. Donkeys are known for its ability to labor, endure, and focus. They are also known for their spirit of strength to help them carry heavy burdens—both things and people.

Be the donkey! Live the seven rules to shake it off and step it up and you’ll be lucky in life!



FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

Mary Stevenson

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed
that during the low periods of my life,
when I was suffering from
anguish, sorrow or defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord,
"You promised me Lord,
that if I followed you,
you would walk with me always.
But I have noticed that during
the most trying periods of my life
there have only been one
set of footprints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you most,
you have not been there for me?"

The Lord replied,
"The times when you have
seen only one set of footprints,
is when I carried you."



GOOD LUCK BAD LUCK

Unknown

Everything that seems on the surface to be an evil may be a good in disguise. And everything that seems good on the surface may really be an evil. So we are wise when we take one day at a time and focus on the situation at hand because one never knows when something is a blessing or a curse. Be grateful that you are alive to experience what life has to offer you that day.

Here is a Chinese story that helps to keep me focused on this important life lesson!

There was a farmer who used an old horse to till his fields. One day, the horse escaped into the hills and when the farmer's neighbors sympathized with the old man over his bad luck, the farmer replied, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?"

A week later, the horse returned with a herd of horses from the hills and this time the neighbors congratulated the farmer on his good luck. His reply was, "Good luck? Bad luck? Who knows?"

Then, when the farmer's son was attempting to tame one of the wild horses, he fell off its back and broke his leg. Everyone thought this very bad luck. Not the farmer, whose only reaction was, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?"

Some weeks later, the army marched into the village and drafted every able-bodied youth they found there. When they saw the farmer's son with his broken leg, they let him off. Now was that good luck or bad luck?

Who knows?!

THE GIVING TREE

Shel Silverstein

Once, there was a tree...
And she loved a little boy.
And every day the boy would come
And he would gather her leaves
And make them into crowns and play king of the
forest.
He would climb up her trunk
And swing from her branches
And eat apples
And they would play hide-and-go-seek.
And when he was tired, he would sleep in her
shade.
And the boy loved the tree... very much...
And the tree was happy.

But time went by,
And the boy grew older.
And the tree was often alone.
Then, one day, the boy came to the tree and the
tree said:
–“Come, Boy, come and climb up my trunk and
swing from my branches and eat apples and
play in my shade and be happy!”
–“I am too big to climb and play” said the boy.
“I want to buy thing and have fun. I want some
money.
Can you give me some money?”
–“I’m sorry”, said the tree, “but I have no
money. I have only leaves and apples. Take my
apples, Boy, and sell them in city. Then you will
have money and you’ll be happy.”
And so the boy climbed up the tree and
gathered her apples and carried them away.
And the tree was happy...

But the boy stayed away for a long time... and
the tree was sad.
And then one day the boy came back, and the
tree shook with joy, and she said:
–“Come, Boy come and climb up my trunk and
swing from my branches and eat apples and
play in my shade and be happy.”
–“I am too busy to climb trees,” said the boy. “I
want a house to keep me warm”, he said. “I and
want a wife and I want children, and so I need a
house. Can you give me a house?”
–“I have no house”, said the tree. “The forest is

my house”, said the tree. “But you may cut off
my branches and build a house. Then you will be
happy”.
And so the boy cut off her branches and carried
them away to build his house. And the tree was
happy.
But the boy stayed away for a long time...
And when he came back, the tree was so happy
she could hardly speak.
–“Come, Boy” she whispered, “Come and play”.
–“I am too old and sad to play”, said the boy. “I
want a boat that will take me away from here.
Can you give me a boat?”
–“Cut down my trunk and make a boat”, said
the tree. “Then you can sail away... and be
happy”.
And so the boy cut down her trunk
And made a boat and sailed away.
And the tree was happy...
But not really.

And after a long time the boy came back again.
–“I am sorry, Boy”, said the tree, “but I have
nothing left to give you – My apples are gone”.
–“My teeth are too weak for apples”, said the
boy.
–“My branches are gone”, said the tree. “You
cannot swing on them”.
–“I am too old to swing on branches”, said the
boy.
–“My trunk is gone”, said the tree. “You cannot
climb”.
–“I am too tired to climb”, said the boy.
–“I am sorry” sighed the tree. “I wish that I
could give you something... but I have nothing
left. I am just an old stump. I am sorry...”
–“I don’t need very much now”, said the boy.
“Just a quiet place to sit and rest. I am very
tired”.
–“Well”, said the tree, straightening herself up
as much as she could, “well, an old stump is
good for sitting and resting. Come, Boy, sit
down... sit down and rest”.
And the boy did.
And the tree was happy...

The end.

“Dream BIG. Shine BRIGHT. Create Your BEST Life!” –Molly Nece