



EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE

As we all might listen to the nightly news the reports of our youth holding up old ladies, robbing convenience stores, beating up on other young people and even pre-meditated murder has become a commonplace part of our listening and viewing experience. As old as it seems to be getting, I still become very upset to hear about our future generation making some of the serious mistakes that tend to label them and characterize them as evil, irresponsible and lazy. The problem with those characterizations is that we tend to place all of our youth into that category.

But this article isn't about misguided youth. In fact it concerns my involvement with young people who offer a sense of pride and hope for the future of our world. I will offer only two of many examples. The first is my work with a group of young athletes who were aspiring to becoming a part of the NFL Draft. Previous to working with them around how to gain focus and self-confidence in their competitive sport of football, I took the time to go to their training facility called Optimum Performance Training Institute. The very hard work that they were required to perform in order to qualify for the "combine" was something that most lovers of the game ever witness. Their coach, Rich Lansky, was relentless in his expectations of these young men at times to the point of exhaustion. What I noticed was that they were not fazed with those expectations. It was clear that they had a sense of purpose ... namely of proving themselves both to themselves as well as to their counterparts who were training with them.

Their look of determination stemmed from a dream that I later found out each had since they were young children of playing football professionally. Some had a college degree and others not. They worked together as a team ... encouraging each other to overcome the exhaustion their training forced in favor of reaching the next plateau of performance. Upon meeting these young men and coming to know them personally, I found a sense of sincerity and gentlemanliness that was the underlay to their tough exterior. They were sensitive and very involved in what little I had to offer them and their interest suggested that they would use mental methods that were part of my training for their going to the Draft. They were genuinely grateful for my involvement and some even asked to maintain contact with me beyond the training session.

The second example is that of a young lady with whom I've consulted who is an outstanding athlete and scholar with a 4.0 average in her high school studies. She is

aspiring to both an athletic as well as an academic scholarship to college and plans to finish her high school studies early in order to apply to college. She has a remarkable confidence about her along with a pleasant sense of humor and a good deal of sensitivity while yet being strong of mind, body and character. Although very attractive, she doesn't flaunt her qualities. She has a deep sense of purpose that is characterized by her saying that she "hates procrastination" and prefers to attack whatever her responsibilities might be instead of putting them off or trying to skirt them.

She demonstrates a sense of maturity that belies her age and it is clear that she has become a model for many of her peers who both look up to her as well as seek her out for her opinion and advice. She isn't afraid of hard work and is willing to do her best even with those elements in her sport and academically that bore her to death. There is a sense of balance and perspective that she embodies that is truly admirable and enviable. She aspires to becoming a physical therapist in order to help other athletes just as her injuries were helped by professionals allowing her to continue in her sport. Her dedication and strength shine through the moment anyone would have a conversation with her. Hard work, not drugs, are her key to success and there is little doubt or question that she will achieve most anything to which she puts her mind and efforts.

And so, we have young people who demonstrate the opposite of what we might see on TV. These are young people who are talented but whose hard work has brought them to the success levels that they've achieved. Nothing was handed to them. What they have achieved is what they have deserved. All of them demonstrate a welcome EXCEPTION TO THE RULE. There are many more of these young people out there. Seek them out and don't be overcome with the negativity you see on the nightly news. They are right in your Community.

A Brief Biographical Sketch

After an over 40 year career as a professional psychotherapist and Director of The Sports Stress Clinic in Amherst, NY, Charles Bonasera came to Florida and decided to use the benefits of his previous professional experiences in his new roles of Consultant in Life Management and Business Coaching as well as his expertise as a Motivational Speaker. He once again became involved with athletes in different sports training them with his techniques to help them develop and maintain focus as well as staying in their zone. Much of his training methods are derived from the CD collection he developed under the heading of WIN-WIN SECRETS as the President of Personal Identity Controls. This collection consists of thirty-six programs dealing with vital issues in the management of stress.

Another role that he adopted to add to his professional career was that of Author. Early in the 1980's he wrote Guide to a Life Management Process which he has re-written as a workbook to successfully help people manage their stress which includes his own Working Model. As a result in his interest in golf and realizing that it was

essentially a “mind game”, he wrote The Mental Side of Golf which can benefit the beginner as well as professionals playing the game of golf.

He then compiled over five-hundred sayings that he had developed in the course of his professional career as stimuli to help people change patterns in their lives entitled How to Stay Well and Live Life to the Fullest. This was followed by a book documenting case studies around disruptive life patterns including ways to change them under the name of How in the Hell Did This Happen to Me? Both his personal involvement in sports as a participant, coach, manager and in his role in officiating, inspired him to write a primer for parents and coaches entitled The Legend of Little League.

Charles invites you to view his website at www.charlesmbonasera.com as well as to write with your comments and questions to his e-mail address (charles@charlesmbonasera.com). He would also be very happy to communicate with his readers by telephone should they desire. His professional motto is “seeking alternative methods to happiness” and wishes those touched by his words to practice the three secrets to a happy life: “enjoy life and enjoy it thoroughly ... develop and maintain a sense of humor ... bring as much love into your life as possible.