



[FORREST GUMP'S SECRET](#)

I'm not sure that anyone could have played the role any better than Tom Hanks. Initially, I wondered whether the movie Forrest Gump was worth watching. Apart from the excellent acting that was portrayed, there were two other factors that enticed me to continue viewing the film. One was his *simplicity of thought* and the other his *love of life*.

I have spent over half of my life trying to help people realize how they might use their minds, thoughts and feelings to their advantage. One of the main deterrents to their being successful in doing so is their complexity of thought. Too often there's just too much going on in the cranium area. Everything becomes jumbled, confused and overwhelming. When that happens, we lose any sense of purpose or organization and whatever it is that we do or plan to do becomes sidetracked...or better yet...sabotaged...and we end up going around in circles. You've been there. You go into a room to get something and when you get there, you forgot what it was that you were to get or even why you are there. You probably don't have a memory problem. Most likely, you have an OVERLOADED CRANIUM!!

So, people get accused of procrastination, resistance and even laziness but really what's really happening is much simpler and more frustrating than those categories depict. Much of the time, one of the prime causes of this phenomenon is the fact that we are probably doing more to please others or at least appear in a certain manner to them than we are doing what's right and good for ourselves. Yes, I'm recommending that people learn how to become selfish. I don't mean the kind of selfishness that excludes others from our lives or becoming inconsiderate toward others. No, I'm talking about a "POSITIVE SELFISHNESS" that allows us to focus in on what's good for us before we place the needs of others ahead of our own needs. In this way, we can better serve others if that is our bent. In other words, if we are lacking in some respect or another, our ability to help or involve others is diminished in kind. So, in my definition of "selfishness", it becomes a WIN-WIN situation for all concerned.

Gump's simplicity enabled him to cut through the "red tape" of life and get to the gist of whatever needed doing. When others were approaching meeting a need in a

complicated manner, he simply “cut to the chase” and did what had to be done without fanfare or seeming effort. In effect, his handicap was his strength and I’ve worked with many handicapped people...both physically and mentally...to know that the people’s ability to compensate for whatever problem they might be experiencing is an amazing process to witness. I still marvel at that process. Where others may gawk and find the seeming handicap, I always look for the demonstration of how well they can get around obstacles. Frankly, sometimes I often wonder whether the gawkers have more of a handicap than those they are watching. They are able to break down a complex task into its simplest components in order to complete each step so that they might reach their ultimate goal. My sister, Jo, was stricken with polio at the age of eight and she had a marvelous ability to calm my overwhelmed sense of completing a task by doing just that. Although I may have objected to being “told what to do”, in effect her simple approach to problem-solving was both unique and effective.

The other element that Forrest manifested was a true sense of a love of life. There was no pretense about him and you could not help but feel his sincerity in dealing with the simple pleasures (especially chocolate) and people in his life. He was even able to help his mother, portrayed by Sally Field, understand and accept what she was afraid to understand and accept. Apart from fearing for his well-being, her fear of losing the person upon whom much of her own life was predicated was very intense. He would quell her fears and rationally come up with new perspectives with which she could approach him and even her own life. His love for his mother and his love of life and everyone in it was resplendently evident throughout the film. People were ultimately attracted to him after initially being taken aback by his simplicity.

Love of life is a quality that seems sorely lacking in this day-and-age. I believe that the reason for this is that the complexity of life doesn’t allow us to see the simple and beautiful things. Just this morning, as I was leaving my physician’s office after a flu shot, I met someone from my Community who was mesmerized by a huge fresh water fish tank in the waiting room. I asked if the fish were doing ok and I broke his trance. He responded “It’s mystifying!”

Yes, I believe that life is mystifying, intriguing and genuinely simple. It is we who make it so complicated to our own disadvantage. The favorite tag line from the movie is *the world will never be the same once you've seen it through the eyes of Forrest Gump*. Would that we could all see that same world and enjoy it the way he did. We can. Just slow it down a bit and you’ll be very surprised at finally seeing what you have been missing all these years.

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.