



HOW CHOICES AFFECT OUR LIVES

They're always mad at me. I'm always doing something wrong. They never tell me when I do something right. They don't really love me. They love my little sister more and better than they love me. That's o.k. I'll bet if I ran away they'd miss me. Or if I died they'd feel so bad that they would cry and cry for me to return. Then, maybe they would love me more. When I grow up, I'm going to be the bravest fireman in the world. I'm going to move away from this house and live by myself and I'll be able to do whatever I want and nobody will tell me what to do anymore. When I grow up, I'm going to do everything that I can't do now...eat everything I can't eat now...and be able to tell other people what they can and cannot do. I'm going to be the boss of everything and everyone.

As a child once myself, as a therapist working with many children and as a father and grandfather of seven, the above scenario would not be uncommon banter for a child to experience and verbalize to him or herself when they are feeling unloved or unappreciated by their parents. The fantasy is a way of "getting even" for something that's out of their control...something that they need more than the breaths that they take...LOVE.

Without love, our lives are empty and meaningless...whether we're a child who's been chastised and feels unloved or an adult who doesn't feel that those closest to them don't appreciate and love them for who they are. Many of us grow up with those same feelings hounding us that led us to meander into fantasies of "payback" for the hurt that we might have felt as a child. The scene has changed but the person's feelings and perspective hasn't.

There's one thing missing...a very important aspect of our enjoying the privilege of becoming an adult...the ELEMENT OF CHOICE. We didn't have many, if any, choices as children. The sources of our well-being were our parents or parent-figures and we were entirely dependent on them to have our needs met. As we grow into adulthood, many people...in fact most people...tend to forget that with adult status comes choices. Apart from not realizing this fact and therefore not being able to get "out of the rut" of feeling choice less and defeated and unloved, many adults were never taught about

choices. They weren't taught what they were, how to make them and how they influenced their lives. They weren't taught how choices determined their ability to conduct their lives in a positive manner as well as how they were responsible for all of the choices that they made. They weren't taught that choices oftentimes can make the difference between happiness and despair.

In a very real sense, a person's movement into coaching, life management or psychotherapy in order to deal with their issues is like a "growing up" that may have never taken place along with their chronological changes...viz. growing up emotionally. I don't say that to insult anyone but merely to point up the fact that the lack of awareness of choices can keep us stuck developmentally and emotionally so that we end up believing, thinking and feeling in much the same manner as we did as children. We need to go through the process of recognizing and learning how to use choices to enhance our lives. That enhancement could affect our primary relationships, work situations, friendships and even our recreational lives in order to make them richer and more meaningful. The movement that occurs in coaching, life management or psychotherapy allows people the opportunity to come in touch with what they had missed that is so vitally important to their roles as adults. It enables them to breathe the "fresh air" of having choices in their lives and to be able to realize the dream of what they can "become" at their fingertips. When I grow up, I won't have to "get even". Instead, I can enjoy my life and the lives of the people I love and who love me.

A Brief Biographical History

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.