



### **POSITIVE THINKING ... MYTH OR REALITY**

I suppose that just about everyone who will be reading this article is familiar with the name Syesha Mercado. For those who aren't she is one of three finalists in the American Idol singing contest on TV and hails from the Sarasota area of our State. Actually, I wasn't that interested in the program but my wife is and the more she talked about it, the more I paid attention and especially because of Syesha's climb into the final three. I was not only impressed with her melodic capabilities but I noted how positive she was despite criticism from one of the judges. Instead of wavering as a result of that criticism, she just sang all the better in subsequent appearances. It was clear that it wasn't others upon whom she was focused but on herself and what she KNEW that she could do based on her belief.

This morning, on my way back from the gym, I listened to an interview that she had with some local morning show hosts. She talked about how her entrance into the American Idol contest occurred in stages and each stage was not successful. But she kept on trying for one simple reason. She indicated that despite her past difficulties, someone told her "this is going to be your year". She believed that and based her sense of continuing on that belief. She also talked about how frightening it was when, in the contest, she started to lose her voice. And then she said that subsequently she sang her "heart out" and gave the best performance of her career. She said that she sang for her survival in the contest and remained a contestant as a result.

Now, I've written many articles on the power of positive thinking as it can affect any and all areas of our lives. Sports, business, relationships, adventures all can be affected by positive thinking. And yet, there is a sense of skepticism that prevails on the part of some who cannot believe that, for instance, if you envision and focus on your next shot in golf, the chances are very great that it will occur as you envisioned it. That is nothing more than positive thinking in a golf game. Let me try and explain why this skepticism might exist.

Whether people admit it or not, there is an element of superstition that tends to influence our thinking. We often talk about good and bad luck as being something over which we have no control. Actually, when I was coaching losing teams in sports, I would invent

superstitions to bring “good luck” to those kids who had lost faith in their ability to win. I remember in hockey our team was at the “bottom of the barrel” and one day I suggested that the players could not wear any other under shorts or socks than the ones they had on (although they could be washed). Believe it or not, they began to win a few games and so the superstition stuck. However, what I was trying to promote was that they not focus on losing but on their ability to win which is what superstition is really all about. If we believe in ourselves and our abilities as the primary consideration in whatever we do, our focus will bring out the best and, not unusually, result in a successful outcome.

And so, Syesha, I really don't have to wish you the best of luck. You have a secret that I can only write about but that you will experience. And win or lose the contest, you will have won if you know that you have done your level best by focusing on what you CAN DO instead of depending on the good wishes of those who admire your talents.

Here are some points that you might want to consider:

- Confidence is believing in yourself AND believing that what you believe IS TRUE;
- Your ability comes from within so if you are accustomed to looking to others for support, try focusing on what you have already accomplished and repeat it;
- Bad luck is nothing more than ONE FAILED ATTEMPT. However, there are many more tries that you can make that could be successful.

### **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](http://www.charlesmbonasera.com) as well as to write with your comments and questions to his e-mail address ([charles@charlesmbonasera.com](mailto: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.*