



THE CARRYOVER EFFECT

Dave is having a particularly hard time dealing with his boss at work. For the last month-or-so he's been leaving his employment feeling dejected and defeated. He's afraid of telling his boss what he really thinks because of the threat of being fired and so he retains his feelings instead although he's really not sure what he's feeling since there is a myriad of emotions that he's experiencing.

At first, Dave was successful at hiding those feelings from himself and others. He pretended that everything was fine and that the problems at work weren't any "big deal". He used humor to cover his dissatisfaction in the workplace and many of his fellow employees enjoyed being around him. Although he seldom drank alcohol, he began going out with a group from the office whose reputation was that of being "the happy hour gang" after work.

Now Dave had a beautiful wife and two young children who couldn't wait for their father to return from work. They would wait for his car to drive up the driveway by the front window during the winters and outside whenever the weather allowed. Then, once he emerged, they would run to him so that he would twirl them around for a few minutes before he had his dinner. He also enjoyed spending time with his wife in the kitchen while she prepared dinner where they would talk about their day's activities while the children scampered around.

Of late, though, Dave has been coming home later than usual. Although he wasn't clearly aware of it, after he left the happy hour, he tended to drive much faster than usual using the reasoning that he was in a hurry to get home. But he was much more irritable as time went on and he would become very upset and, as time progressed, enraged with other people's driving habits. His driving into his driveway was much faster than usual and the children could sense that he didn't want to play their twirling game anymore. Instead, he preferred to be left alone while he poured himself another drink and sat in a corner reading the newspaper often choosing to eat dinner alone. His wife was concerned about his attitude and behavior but was fearful of bringing it up because it might make things worse. His anger frightened her. It seemed that he was distancing himself from his family more and more as time went on. When his wife would ask him if anything was wrong, he would gruffly reply "nothing's wrong" and retreat into his world of solitude.

I won't continue with this story because the process is clear and the reader can draw his or her own conclusions as to the outcome. Suffice it to say, though, that the general pattern Dave displayed is both dangerous and not all that uncommon. The CARRYOVER EFFECT is a phenomenon that is occurring more and more in our fast-paced, society. Dealing with those elements that displease us is becoming less possible because of the fears that may surround them. Paying attention to the feelings that are warning signs of danger is being replaced with "medicating them" with alcohol, pills, avoidance and denial. Such feelings would be considered a sign of weakness and expressing them would strictly be frowned upon.

The answer to this problem is simple yet complex. In order for people not to fall into Dave's trap, they would need to step forward after acknowledging and labeling their feelings and talk with whomever necessary in order to bring some sense of reasonability to the situation. It's quite possible that Dave should not have continued in his job. However, it may also be presumptuous to conclude that his boss was completely unapproachable or that his job would be seriously imperiled if he had expressed his thoughts and feelings.

Although the solution might be a frightening one, the consequences that might result are certainly much more serious than not confronting the situation. It's a choice that demands that a person needs to be aware of not just the present but future consequences as well.

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.