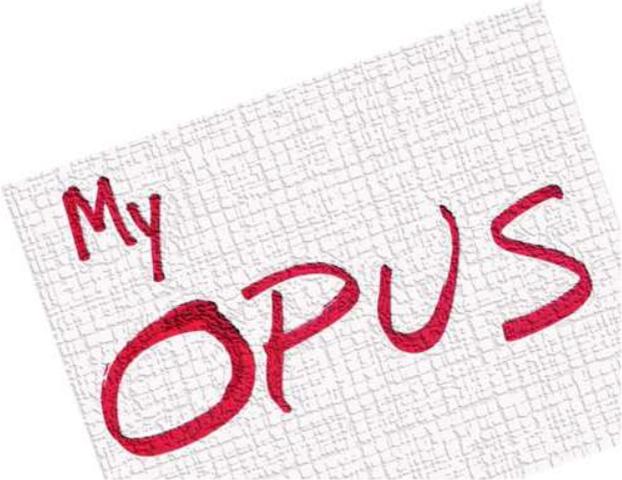




The Blah



Living Life Outside the Blah

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Prologue

One of my favorite quotations commonly attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson but written in 1903 by Muriel Strode, an American poet and essayist, is:

“I will not follow where the path may lead, but I will go where there is no path, and I will leave a trail.”

I was attracted to these words because I have always considered myself one of those guys who say “hey did anyone every think about doing this?” as a pretext to solving a problem, promoting a cause, creating an event or maybe just to get someone’s head out of the rut that comes from not using their imagination.

I have a passion for the novel and funny things in life and like to use my imagination to solve problems for individuals and organizations; especially when they are endeavoring to help others.

So many times people in organizations get stuck trying to maintain the way they do things they forget to be imaginative.

So I see myself as someone who would teach them to, what I call, “Think outside the Blah.” The blah being that mindless thinking down that path that Muriel Strode stated she would not follow.

When I was in 8th grade a wanted to be a cartoonist. I thought that the Mad Magazine artists were the coolest people in the world. I found that I really wasn’t a good sketch artist but I did fall in love with the off-beat comedy of the magazine. As I became older I remember staying up late to watch Johnny Carson every night to be entertained by some of the greatest comedic minds of the time. These guys became my idols and I really dreamed of becoming a stand-up comedian.

This enjoyment of comedians and laughter began to define my outlook on life. Don’t take yourself or life too seriously. There certainly has to be more to life than study and hard work. It’s easier and more fun to laugh. It took me a long time but I realize now that having this type of attitude about life can cause you to truly never understand your purpose.

So as I attempt to go where there is no path and leave a trail, I can see that who I started out as and who I will now become, that is one who has immersed himself in the pursuit of leadership knowledge and has a desire to teach others, can effectively meld the two Mikes into a unique person for others to learn from and to follow.

So I envision bringing value to people and organizations by teaching, coaching, speaking and writing. I can see myself teaching a roomful of people about the value of proper leadership, coaching others with the insight I will gain from my coach, speaking with the wit of those comedians I admired on Johnny Carson and writing. And maybe, just maybe my first book will be entitled “Think Oustide the Blah;” with the subtitle, “using your imagination and wit to lead a successful organization.”

Overarching Vision

In an atmosphere created for exploring, learning and growing I will gather adventuring people and introduce to them a process that will allow them to discover their passion, find their purpose and then use these as tools to become champions in leading innovative organizations.

Purpose

I will challenge people to step off their well-worn path, use their imagination to “Think Outside the Blah,” and leave a trail of inspirational leadership

Unifying Strategies

- ***Create the Educational Adventure*** – The development of teachable content in written, digital and verbal form.
- ***Recruit the Tribe*** – The development and execution of an effective marketing plan will target the type of people who will be drawn to participate.
- ***Lead Myself*** – A continuing plan of spiritual, mental and physical self development.
- ***Lead Others*** – A continuing plan of giving to others by sharing my time and talents.

Scorecard For Significance

Create an Educational Adventure

- Compile an inventory of my existing presentations & blog articles and select those adaptable to my O.
- Adapt existing material and create 5 main presentations.
- Refine the book outline for “Think Outside the Blah” and write a complete book proposal. Use Michael Hyatt’s format.
- Write a series of short presentations (3-5 minutes) based on my O for filming.

Recruit the Tribe

- Get Noticed – write and execute a plan that will put me in front of people and organizations.
- Create sales copy describing presentations using Michael Hyatt’s format.
- Complete the building of website mikeclevenger.com and start the presentation of material on blog, Youtube and social media sites

Lead Myself

- Spiritual – begin a program for bible study and attend church regularly.
- Mental – continue my one hour a day leadership study, read two new leadership books a month and participate in a regular forum of leadership discussion.
- Physical – continue my program of proper diet and exercise.

Scorecard – continued

Lead Others – An experimental lab for leadership

- Compete the content for the OES conference leadership presentation
- Revise & complete the scripts for filming of 21 Laws for Freemason University.
- Continue the development of The Shrine Leadership College curriculum.



*There's that Blah
Again, Stay out of it!*

My Six Pack

Worldview – What I Believe

I believe that the world is much like a teenager's cluttered messy room. There are clothes, dirty and clean, heaped in various piles. There are various pieces of paper scattered about the floor, the desk and on the bed. There are displays of items of importance like pictures, trophies, awards hung on the walls, lined up on shelves or tucked away in drawers. There seems to be no sense of organization that would allow one to find something quickly if needed. The world is much like this room I describe and if one is not careful he will take one look and shut the door to hide the un-kept and hideous site from view.

I believe one should look at our world and realize that the cluttered messiness is masking immense value that that is hidden somewhere under all the piles. I believe if one will explore they will find great knowledge, great people and great uncovered treasures. I believe this is where I will find my world.

Identity – Who I am

- ***I am creative.*** I excel (and excited) when I am an innovator. Therefore, I enjoy being in a collaborative group that seeks to creatively improve a situation, process or perhaps an event by gathering and sharing knowledge.
- ***I am a learner.*** I read incessantly and look for information I can use to apply to my life and share with those around me. Being a learner I also seek out those who are more intelligent than I and listen intently so that I may improve.
- ***I am a strategic thinker.*** I can visualize a task or project from beginning to end. I have often said that I create outlines in my head.
- ***I am a communicator.*** I am at my best when writing, speaking, teaching and sharing my visions and views with others.
- ***I am comfortable around people.*** I do not relate to people based on their rank, economic status or title. This allows me to be as comfortable talking with the guy digging a ditch as with the CEO whose company hired him.

Principles - What I Value

- I value ***the ability to choose*** the direction my remaining life will take.
- I value ***the contribution others have made.***
- I value ***helping others***
- I value ***education***
- I value the sound of ***laughter***

Passion – What I Love

- I love my **wife and family**
- I love **being alone** sometimes
- I love **discovering** new things
- I love **teaching** others
- I love **explaining** complicated things
- I love **books**
- I love **creating and listening** to music
- I love the contemplation of **the meaning of my life**

Purpose – Why I Live and Work

I live and work **to compensate** for what I believe was my biggest failure in life; entering college after high school with no direction and flunking out.

I live and work reflecting often upon **where I might be, what I might be doing had I just have had some help to discover what might be my passion before entering college.**

I live and work constantly **trying to compensate for my single greatest failure.** I constantly think about the following things:

- A **proper education** properly applied to your life's passion is to be greatly valued
- It is important to **determine as early as possible your talents** and understanding how they can be applied to a career.
- If you do not do a & b above there will become a time in your life when you may discover your passion and you frantically try to "catch up" but end up **feeling as if you are never going to get ahead of the game.**
- Also you will find that **it is much more difficult to re-direct your life than to begin it properly.**
- **You can become a victim and find that you begin accepting what happens to you rather than determining what will happen.**
- **Maintaining a positive mind-set is much more difficult** as you keep being drawn back to your life of circumstance.

***I will endeavor to live and work
crafting a message that will help me as well as
others to discover our passions in life and live our
dreams.***