

Embrace Your Full Wingspan

By Kristin Mackey

City to city I went, seminar after seminar until my voice could not be cured by the complementary lemon water or \$2.50 tea and honey. Coast to coast, airport to airport I bounced with my travel polyester “silk” suit and my one carry on bag so skillfully packed if awards were given, I would embarrassingly win. You see, I had the job of leading business seminars across the country. A job, or shall I say a “lifestyle” that inspired the work I do now. Back then it was rise at five, speak till four then drive or fly to the next city – rinse/repeat. I taught countless business seminars on how to be a shinier, more organized, better overall professional. From improving your customer service skills to how to best lead an organization through change, I had the tools that enhanced the machine.

I had this routine for almost three years with the occasional break whereas the wrestling matches with mail and more impromptu “inspirational speeches” convincing loved ones that I still cared took focus. I had the privilege of popping in almost 300 cities – some I’d return to, some I don’t even remember.

When people would ask what I did for a living, my answer often confused them. The very nature of what I did perplexed many that I felt my elevator speech needed tweaking. “I fly city to city speaking at seminars on professional development skills” became the mantra. The common response was the usual confirmed nod, confused eyes and a smirk that said, but you look “12”. Perhaps my suspicion of their skepticism was none other than my own inability to believe I had taken this unique path successfully and yet it resembled nothing of my original plan or the degree hanging on my wall. It was then I realized that I did not seek this path, it found me.

As I made my way around airports, brush fires, ice storms, hail storms and even a tornado in North Dakota, I never felt more at home. Being on the road was supposed to make you feel lost, frustrated, homesick – and yes, I had my share of that, but once I became friends with the planet and stopped calling other people strangers, I grew tremendously. In every tree, interstate, chair and pond and in every smile, book, joke and song - I became a more authentic version of me. I carried very few belongings and traveled with no one – but internally I had everything with everyone.

What I came to know in the spaces between my pulled together persona came from the intimate chats around the seminar. In between the organizing tips, the “how to handle in subordination” and better ways to say no, were the fine whisperings from the “human capital” not quite feeling like the powerhouses they were just retooled to be. The bag of skills they left with certainty improved their productivity, ability to handle conflict and maintain a priority list, but left their spirit with empty hands.

Metropolitan city to small manufacturing plant I heard the intimate feelings of the most polished of talent and of the struggling sort. Feelings of being lost, not belonging and dissatisfaction echoed about each trip. If “human capital” made up the ingredients of our

organizations, then perhaps our investment in outward skills merely masks over what truly inspires the talent that drives our organizations – creativity.

If I sat down with a leader of a family, team or organization I would share this hard-earned wisdom from the voices blanketing our country – please allow their full wingspan. Allow their full creativity to be unleashed, their innovative ideas, unique business models and passionate initiatives – let their creative spirit FREE.

What I share with my clients is this: If a situation or circumstance does not allow for your full wingspan, consider mustering up the courage to influence the proper change or simply change where you offer your talents... because without your full creative wingspan, how ever will you fly?

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