

MY HOPED FOR LEGACY

INTRODUCTION:

- I found this in my mind as I awoke on March 5, 2006.
- It is my ideal legacy, the treasure trove I want to bequeath to those I love.
- The most important part of one's life is not what he does; not who he is; but what he leaves.
- The letters of my name form the outline of my talk.

C · O · T · T · L · E

I. C: CHARACTER

- A. Character is to one's life what the thumb is to the other fingers of the hand; it activates and empowers everything else in our lives.
1. Without character, no other gifts matter.
 2. Thumb = Character
 - Index finger = Caring
 - Middle finger = Charisma
 - Ring finger = Capital
 - Little finger = Cunning
- B. Remember that character is measured by conduct, not intention, wish or desire.
- Your character ultimately determines your conduct; therefore, your conduct is the only real measure of your character.
- C. So - Don't Deceive!
1. Don't pretend to be what you are not.

- To others - this is hypocrisy.
 - To yourself - this is idiocy.
2. When you deceive others, this brands you as dishonest and makes you irresponsible.
 3. When you deceive yourself, this brands you as disturbed and makes you irrelevant.

CONCLUSION - THE FIRST TREASURE: CHARACTER

II. O: OPPORTUNITY

- A. Never stop giving yourself an opportunity to win ... succeed ... excel!
 1. Stay in the game!
 2. Ann Landers: “If at first you do succeed, try something better.”
 3. Tom Hopkins: The Champion’s Creed

“I am not judged by the number of times I fail, but by the number of times I succeed. And the number of times I succeed is in direct proportion to the number of times I could have failed but kept trying.”
- B. Remember:
 1. The only real loser is the one who quits.
 2. It is not the failure who loses; it is the quitter.
 3. You may fail at task after task, goal after goal, but you are not a failure unless and until you quit.
 4. Churchill: “Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.”
- C. So - DON’T QUIT!
 1. The late Earl Nightingale, writer and publisher of inspirational and motivational material, once told a story about a boy named Sparky.

- For Sparky, school was all but impossible. He failed every subject in the eighth grade. He flunked physics in high school, getting a grade of zero.
- Sparky also flunked Latin, algebra, and English. He didn't do much better in sports. Although he did manage to make the school's golf team, he promptly lost the only important match of the season. There was a consolation match; he lost that too.
- Throughout his youth, Sparky was socially awkward. He was not actually disliked by the other students; no one cared that much. He was astonished if a classmate ever said hello to him outside of school hours.
- There's no way to tell how he might have done at dating. Sparky never once asked a girl to go out in high school. He was too afraid of being turned down.
- Sparky was a loser. He, his classmates ... everyone knew it. So he rolled with it. Sparky had made up his mind early in life that if things were meant to work out they would. Otherwise, he would content himself with what appeared to be his inevitable mediocrity.
- However, one thing was important to Sparky - drawing. He was proud of his artwork. Of course, no one else appreciated it. In his senior year of high school, he submitted some cartoons to the editors of the yearbook. The cartoons were turned down. Despite this particular rejection, Sparky was so convinced of his ability that he decided to become a professional artist.
- After completing high school, he wrote a letter to Walt Disney Studios. He was told to send some samples of his artwork, and the subject for a cartoon was suggested. Sparky drew the proposed cartoon. He spent a great deal of time on it and on all the other drawings he submitted. Finally, the reply came from Disney Studios. He had been rejected once again. Another loss for the loser.
- So Sparky decided to write his own autobiography in cartoons. He described his childhood self -- a little boy loser and chronic underachiever.

- The cartoon character would soon become famous worldwide. For Sparky, the boy who had such lack of success in school and whose work was rejected again and again - was Charles Schulz.
 - He created the “Peanuts” comic strip and the little cartoon character whose kite would never fly and who never succeeded in kicking a football - Charlie Brown.
2. If I believe in God (and I do); if I believe in an afterlife (and I do); if I believe in the ultimate justice of things (and I do); then all I have to do is not quit and I will be a winner in life.

CONCLUSION - THE SECOND TREASURE: OPPORTUNITY

III. T: TRUST

A. Trust

1. First, trust God.

a. That He is Good.

Psalm 119:68 - God is good and does good! He is not just our Creator; He is also our Father who cares about our well-being.

b. That He loves you.

Jeremiah 31:3 – Everlasting...

Hosea 14:4 – Free... This is exactly what we have in Jesus, God’s Son and our Savior. He is also Lord of our lives.

c. That He walks with you.

Indwelling us and guiding our footsteps on a daily basis and the Holy Spirit. He is closer than a brother and nearer than the very breath we breathe. We can trust God.

2. Second, trust yourself.

a. That you are a gift of God to others.

If you say you have no value, you are saying God is a fool! As the little boy said, “God don’t make no junk!” He made you and called you for a purpose.

- b. That you have a special anointing and purpose in life. (2 Timothy 1:9)
- c. That you can make a difference.
- 3. Third, trust others.
 - a. That they, too, are the gift of a good God to you.
 - b. That, though fallen, they are not evil at the core.
 - c. That you can appeal to and reach the essential good in them.
- B. So - Don’t Doubt!
 - 1. Believe!
 - 2. Hebrews 11:1

“Faith is the substance of things (matters) hoped for (inner essence of the things of which we are confident), the evidence of things not seen. (invisible indicator of that which is not seen)”

CONCLUSION - THE THIRD TREASURE: TRUST

IV. T: TRUTHFULNESS

- A. Behave so that you can be trusted. Reliability and trustworthiness are life’s greatest characteristics.
 - If people don’t trust you, they cannot:
 - Serve you - they don’t know how. Your unreliability is a broken bridge between you and others.
 - Help you - they cannot reach you.
 - Love you - they don’t know you.

B. Remember:

- Lying is a sin against one's own soul.
- Lying creates a contradiction within the self and ties a knot in the psyche.
 - It corrupts the emotions.
 - It confuses the mind.
 - It contravenes the will.

C. So - Don't Lie!

- "Sin has many doors but a lie is the handle on all of them!"

CONCLUSION - THE FOURTH TREASURE: TRUTHFULNESS

V. **L: LOVE**

A. Love

1. God

"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deuteronomy 6:5

2. Yourself

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Luke 10:27

3. Others

"Love is an unusual game. There are either two winners or none."

"You get more than you give when you give more than you get."

4. So - Don't Hate!

- "Hate seldom hurts the hated but it always hurts the hater!"
- "We are the slaves of those we hate."

- Booker T. Washington said:
 “I will never become the slave of another person by hating him.”
- Hate makes one a pessimist and a pessimist cannot be lifted by his blessings. Love makes one an optimist and an optimist cannot be defeated by his troubles.
- Everything of value in this world proceeds from love.
“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35

CONCLUSION - THE FIFTH TREASURE: LOVE

VI. E: EXPECTATION

A. Expect

1. From God - Faithfulness

- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” —

 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness, O God my Father,
 There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
 Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
 As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.”
- *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* Hebrews 13:5

2. From Yourself - Excellence

- Expect to make a difference.
- Expect to matter.

- Expect a miracle.

3. From Others - Response

- From wise Believers – Approval
- From unwise Believers – Mixture: from adulation to animosity
- From wise Unbelievers - Disapproval
- From unwise Unbelievers – Mixture: from rejection to indifference

Pay attention to the wise.

Be aware of the unwise.

B. So - Don't Stop Hoping!

- The Greek word, *elpis*, really means be confident!
- Mary Martin, in "South Pacific," sang it well:

"I'm stuck like a dope with a thing called hope, and I can't get it out of my heart."

Don't ever get it out of your heart either. It will lift you over obstacles and carry you home to your objectives and goals.

- Churchill proved it in World War II when he said to the beleaguered Brits:

"Never . . . never . . . never Give Up!"

- Paul said it like this:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil 4:13

"I can do anything in Christ Who is my inner power."

CONCLUSION - THE SIXTH TREASURE: EXPECTATION

CONCLUSION: MY DESIRED LEGACY - C · O · T · T · L · E

C - CHARACTER

- Without character none of our gifts matter.
- Character is like the thumb to the other fingers, the empowerment and activation of everything else in our lives.
- So - Don't Deceive!

O - OPPORTUNITY

- Keep giving yourself an opportunity to succeed.
- Only the quitter is a loser.
- So - Don't Quit!

T - TRUST

- Trust God, yourself, and others.
- Remember, faith/trust is "*the substance of things hoped for . . .*"
- So - Don't Doubt!

T - TRUTHFULNESS

- Sin has many doors but a lie is the handle on all of them.
- Lying is a sin against one's own soul.
- So - Don't Lie!

L - LOVE

- Everything good in this world comes from love.
- Hate seldom hurts the hated but always hurts the hater.
- So - Don't Hate!

E - EXPECTATION

- Expect from God, yourself, and others.
- Biblical hope (*elpis*) really means “be confident.”
- So - Don’t ever stop hoping!

APPLICATION:

This is my hoped for “True Legacy” to all those I love.

Character - No deceiving

Opportunity - No quitting

Trust - No doubting

Truth - No lying

Love - No hating

Expectation - No lack of hoping

REMEMBER:

“The way to multiply happiness is to divide it among others.”

“If you can walk, you can dance!”

“If you can talk, you can sing!”