



"Notes in the Margins" (Lifelines on living life)

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I first started using the term "Notes in the Margins" one day as I rounded second and headed to third. I've always enjoyed writing notes to no one in particular about things on my mind. And since I already knew how to type, I started doing it more often. A couple of years ago, I edited an old friend's real estate course and spent some time on the road teaching his program. Colby Sandlian has been a partner and mentor of mine for a long time. When I first visited him in Wichita about the course, he gave me a stack of files and old course outlines from his teaching partner, Cliff Weaver, for my reading pleasure.

I never had the privilege of knowing Cliff personally. Instead, I met him through the writing he left behind and, especially, his handwritten notes in the margins. He was a very special individual who made an impact on his world. One day, while writing something about nothing important, I titled the page "Notes in the Margins" and have ever since.

I think all of us have scribbled notes in the margins of a sheet of paper more often than we can recall. It's those handwritten notes that few ever see that oftentimes are the most important lifelines to the life lessons we've learned along the way but often don't share.

Mark Twain's admonishment to would be writers was to, "Write what you know." A friend of his that I am sure he never met either, a guy by the name of Socrates, wrote this tidbit long ago, "One thing only I know, and that is that I know nothing."

Now, I don't claim to be a writer in any sense of the word. I am just a guy who has lived longer than he expected he would, who has had a bunch of interesting adventures, (some better than others) and who has survived to tell the story.

But, the way I see it, there is a huge difference between what "I know" and what "I think I know." This "Notes in the Margins" Observer column will be a collection of my notes, (rarely shared) that I've written along the way. Some will be about things I know, and others will be about things I think I know. Some will be notes by two friends of mine, and what they either know or think they know, Padre Guido, and Rasta Parrot.

The society was born and has prospered over the years based on one simple truism, "Real Estate is a People Business." If my "Notes in the Margins" makes an impact on just one person who reads the column, I will have met that standard. Thanks for reading.

Decision Tests

I had lunch with an old friend and mentor, Dave Hallstrom, a year ago. He had called after we hadn't seen each other for a few months, and told me it was time for a "trip to the woodshed." When I asked, "What have I done this time?" Dave's response was the same as always, "I don't know but I am sure there is a something that we'll discover."

Well, when we got together later that day, we talked about life as we always do. I shared some

things in my life that were certainly woodshed worthy. He told me that he had always applied certain tests to the decisions he made throughout his life.

David was in his early 80's and other than the usual ailments, he described his days as just "hanging around." I am not sure why things happen sometimes, but the next evening, David passed away peacefully while stopped at a red light. The world stood still for a moment.

Dave's spirit still lives in all the hearts of everyone whose life he touched. Here are the notes I scribbled after that last trip to the woodshed.

Each time you are about to make a decision of any sort, put that decision thru some hoops. If nothing else, doing so will give you time to think first before you decide. And, that's usually a good thing.

Public Scrutiny

"Would you want to see your decision described on the front page of the local paper?"

Transparency

"Can you give a clear explanation for your actions, including an honest and transparent account of your intent and motivation?"

Moral mentor

"What would your moral mentor, a wise and good person you admire, do in the situation?"

Admired Observer

"If those you admire observe your action, would they be proud of your decision?"

The Mirror

"Will you be able to look at yourself in the mirror and respect the person you see there?"

The Golden Rule

"Would you like to be on the receiving end of your action and its potential consequences?" "Are you treating others the way you'd want to be treated?"

You know, I miss those trips to the woodshed with David. I learned a lot every time.

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