

FORUM

Never accept the role of victim



Motivational Moments

Nigel Alston

marbles under his tongue to force him to speak clearly. He gave up on this remedy after he repeatedly swallowed several of them. He told his grandmother that he had marbles up to his chin and couldn't take it anymore!

He didn't have a basketball and goal like so many children do today. He took one of his grandmother's clothes hangers and fashioned it into a makeshift rim and one of his grandfather's socks with a hole in it and stuffed it to resemble a basketball. He must have played in 10,000 games, he said, and he won them all. He had a vivid imagination and he could dream.

He never accepted the role of the victim and whenever he had a barrier or challenge to overcome, he always prayed and continued to press on. In a very conversational tone, like someone sitting across the kitchen table, he encouraged the young men in the audience to dream, get an education and to have a positive outlook on life.

Victor E. Frankl, the author of Man's Search for Meaning, says "there insufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: The last of his

freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

In spite of adversity, Bob Love choose to have a positive attitude. He continued to dream and never gave up.

Because of his stutter, he could not obtain a decent job after his great career in the NBA and ended up in a minimum wage job washing dishes and cleaning tables. He applied the same work ethic to this job as he did to playing basketball but could not go any further without improving his speech impediment.

His employer offered to pay for speech therapy and he jumped at the opportunity. According to Love, "I felt like a burden had been lifted off my shoulders." The result of his employer making this opportunity available: he is on the lecture circuit, has completed a book and has negotiated a movie deal about his life.

The difference someone made in his life enables him to inspire, motivate and challenge others to live their dream. You could not help but be inspired by his attitude and never-give-up spirit. He had a desire to one day speak like Martin

Luther King and John F. Kennedy and to address thousands of people. He is making a difference with his message, "if it's to be, it's up to me!"

Like the employer who made a difference by offering to pay for the therapy he needed, each of us makes a difference through our actions and that difference often helps others overcome their obstacles. Often, you don't know the long term impact you are actually making at the time.

He didn't accept the role of the victim, he had a dream and a vivid imagination, and a positive attitude that enabled him to continue make himself better. Today he is speaking to thousands of people and inspiring them to achieve their dreams. I am sure he would agree with the following:

"Build a better world," said God.

And I answered, "How? The World is such a vast place,

and so complicated now, and I'm small and useless; there's nothing I can do."

But God, in all His wisdom, said,

"Just build a better you."

Keep building a better you and you too will achieve success and make a difference in the lives of others like Bob Love.

Nigel Alston is an executive for Integon Insurance Company.

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Don't play with Saddam's hands

Guest Column

Ken Raymond

U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, has stated on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives Thursday that she supports the U.N.-brokered deal with Iraq. A deal which could very well give Saddam Hussein control over the weapon inspection teams and possibly lead to the removal of the economic sanctions over Iraq.

U.N. secretary-general, Kofi Annan signed an agreement with Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz which allows inspectors to visit several sites as long as they are accompanied by U.N. observers. The deal also relies on Saddam Hussein keeping his word to the U.N. and the United States.

"I am gratified that there are reasons which we could possibly support the final resolution that's been offered by Annan," she said.

Saddam Hussein promised to allow weapon inspectors unlimited access to his facilities at the end of the Gulf War and has stiff-armed the inspectors approximately 60 times since then. He's also invaded a neighboring country, used chemical weapons on his own people about 10 times, and attempted to assassinate former-President George Bush. Yet in spite of this, Congresswoman Lee, and Annan believes he can be trusted.

"I hope that the leader of Iraq recognizes that this is not weakness, but strength," Lee said. "And I'm hopeful that he will follow through as he promised."

The Clinton Administration

seems to believe that Hussein, after everything he's done during his reign, is concerned about how the world will perceive him if he breaks his word.

"If he doesn't change his behavior, the world will watch him renege on an agreement signed with the secretary-general and the support of many nations," said State Department spokesman James Rubin.

Conventional wisdom says that the best way to determine what someone will do in the future, is by what they've done in the past. President Clinton made reference to this earlier this week when he said that it's not what Hussein says that matters, it's what he does.

The goal of the United States is to make sure that Iraq is incapable of ever producing and delivering weapons of mass destruction. Hussein's immediate goal is to have the economic sanctions lifted from his country.

The United Nation's, however, doesn't seem to be interested in helping the U.S. to accomplish their goal. In an effort to get the U.N. to help the U.S. do this, American and British diplomats

tried to get the U.N. Security Council to go on record supporting military action if Iraq breaks the new agreement reached last Wednesday. Many security council members showed no enthusiasm over this proposal even though Annan's agreement does not offer any penalties if Iraq does not comply.

Lee also said that the deal will allow the inspectors to do their job unhindered.

"If this leader (Hussein) has acquiesced to allowing the U.N. inspectors to continue their work unfettered where they are allowed to see the palaces and the other sites, than I say let's offer this plan to the U.N. and the United States so that we can go forward in a peaceful manner," she said.

So far, this agreement can be used to "fetter" the inspectors. U.N. spokesman Frederic Eckhard said last Tuesday that a set of rules is also in place to make the inspections "more polite". The rules state that inspectors must be escorted throughout the facilities by a representative from the Iraqi government and the inspectors cannot proceed unless they are present. If

the Iraqi government doesn't send someone, than the inspectors cannot go into the facility.

Lee said that she supports the agreement because it deters war.

"U.S. secretary-general Kofi Annan should be applauded and the process should be applauded," she said. "I support this agreement because it saves lives."

There are at least two ways of deterring war. One way is for one party to be so strong and resolute that the other party doesn't dare challenge or test them. The other way is for one party to just lie down and give in to the other party. Lee seems to be endorsing the latter.

It would be a mistake for the U.S. to turn over it's foreign policy in this matter to an institution that's apparently not interested in seeing that its goals are met. And if the agreement is not made any tougher than it is, than Iraq could very well continue producing weapons which could cost a lot of people in that part of the world their lives.

From the very beginning, Hussein's goal has been to get the economic sanctions lifted from his country, not to have another military confrontation with the United States. Congresswoman Lee and the United Nation's Security Council may be playing right into his hands.

Ken Raymond is a member of Project 21, an African-American leadership organization.



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