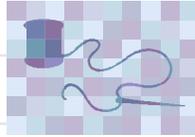


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To our clients and friends

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Thread of Success



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Success leaves tracks

I recently had breakfast with Doug, a 23-year old neighbor. One of our mutual friends asked me to take some time with him. After we got settled in I asked Doug what I call the “high school question.” This is how it goes and I never vary the question by more than a word or two - “Take me back to high school and bring me up to date, put modesty in your back pocket, and brag a little bit; tell me how good you really are. When did you graduate from high school?” This question gives the other person what we all want – permission to nondefensively talk unapologetically about our favorite subject – ourselves. He began to share his biography, his life story; his challenge with dyslexia, difficulties in both grade school and high school, the progress his life has made in recent years, his successes at George Fox University, and his very recent career success of being general manager of a 12 million dollar agricultural business in the Willamette Valley. This success was followed by him losing his job, a real blow that is still haunting him. Toward the end of our breakfast, he said, “Tell me honestly, do you think I have the capacity for being a leader?” My instinctive response was, “Doug, what I look for is a ‘thread of success in the fabric of their life.’ I see a thread of success in the fabric of your life – the way you’ve compensated for and overcome your challenge with dyslexia, the academic successes you achieved after you made a decision to take your opportunity at George Fox University seriously, and your extraordinary successes in your first career position, rising from intern to general manager in less than three years.”

As we commence a new year, as 2012 begins, I recommend that you, when exam-

ining your own life, look for the thread of success in the fabric of your life. When have you overcome challenges, outperformed the norms, beat your bests, taken risks that paid off? This reflection will give you confidence as you set your goals for 2012.

When you are in a hiring position, always make your primary consideration the thread of success. Is there a thread of success in the fabric of this candidate’s life? Do they have a record of performing in an above-average way? Look for above average performance in high school and college. Pay particular attention to extracurricular activities – working, sports, and other meaningful community activities. Did they work their way through school or did their parents pay their way? Did they excel in sports, music, or in volunteer activities? If they borrowed money, how are they doing on their repayment plan? Pay particular attention to any victim roles. Champions never allow themselves to be cast as a victim.

You are looking for a champion, you are looking for a top-grade, outstanding performer, someone who is better in some important areas than everyone else on your team. Yes, better in some important ways than everyone else; not in every way, but in at least one way so everyone on your team can learn from them. To create a winning team, don’t hire to fill positions, recruit champions.

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