

## About Me

The road I've traveled in life has not been a straight one but rather a circular path. My suitcase is packed with several themes to which I have returned time and again to strengthen and deepen. Rumi, the mystic Sufi poet, once said, *sell enlightenment, buy bewilderment*. And so it has been for me.

I live with open questions that are my propellers — my directors of inquiry. These questions have influenced how I've spent my life.

- ▶ Where do dreams come from?
- ▶ Why do I think, feel and behave the way I do?
- ▶ How can I turn vision into reality?
- ▶ What does it mean to be a leader?
- ▶ How can I serve in the world?
- ▶ What would I die for?

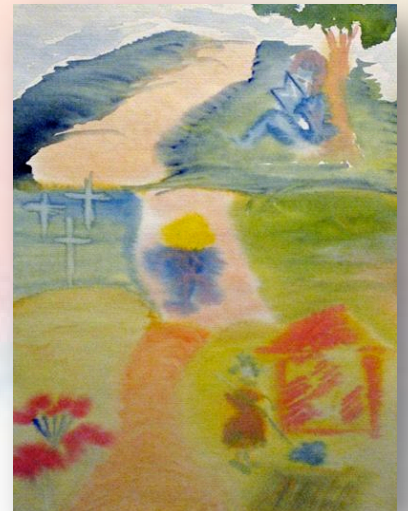
## How I've Spent My Life

### *Phase One — The Schooling Years: 0–18*

I am the oldest child of an entrepreneurial father and a supportive mother raised on the philosophy of *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill and the belief that I can achieve what my mind can conceive.

I split the early years between the US and Canada, moving with my family from a small rural farming community in Minnesota to a large multi-cultural university town in Ontario. My interests were art, spirituality and social change. In spite of skipping a quarter of high school to audit university classes in psychology I graduated an A student.

I thought I'd become an architect or interior designer, but I did not.



### **Phase Two — Social Work: 18–24**

I prepared myself to make a difference in the world of education and personal growth by completing a Bachelors degree in education and art therapy. During this period I started a self-help group, Parents Anonymous, established a curriculum and taught art for the Ministry of Correctional Services, and worked as a counselor in a residential treatment home for boys.

I thought I'd become a teacher or psychologist, but I did not.

### **Phase Three — Business: 24–39**

Taking with me everything I'd learned about teaching and human interactions I founded an interior landscaping business that eventually involved design specifications, retail wholesale and commercial sales, service and manufacturing.

This work literally gave me a free pass into hundreds of businesses and organizations in numerous industries and, over time, I became curious about the differences I observed in employee attitudes, moral, culture, leadership and organizing principles. My desire to make the world a better place through social change grew.

At a certain age and stage of life called maturity, many people, and organizations for that matter, face some kind of choice point between contraction and stagnation or expansion and rebirth. *Elliott Jacques*, psychiatrist and social scientist, coined the popular term for this period, “mid-life crises” in which one asks, is this all there is? Is this what I came here to do? This was my time to sell my business.

I thought I would become a management consultant, and I did.

### **Phase Four — Training and Organization Development: 39–Present**

I may have been daunted if I would have known in advance how much effort and time this transition would take... a diploma in adult education, a masters degree in organization development, and a book on succession planning in family businesses. Initially it seemed like a simple path to be able to design and deliver training. I found that many companies were using training programs to solve performance management and organizational issues, but once there I found managers and leaders, particularly in family businesses, had difficulty creating and sustaining change — especially in the arena of succession planning.



I would say that I am a recovering entrepreneur. I discovered through personal experience that the characteristics that make people successful in business, like single minded focus on one goal to the exclusion of almost all else, are frequently at odds with what makes a good personal or family relationship. Now I help people find ways to have both.

I thought it would be easier and faster, but it wasn't.

### *Phase Five — Know Thyself: A Work in Progress*

Over the doors of the ancient mystery schools were written the words *Know Thyself* meaning that once students acquired outer skills and abilities they be strengthened by development of an inner capacity for self awareness, empathy, compassion, forgiveness, service and love.

As long as I can remember I've had a more spiritual than religious orientation towards life — believing in a higher purpose and divine right order that can be understood only through personal experience and acceptance of universal truth.

I have acquired more than 3500 hours of personal and professional growth courses and training to become a laying-on-of-hands healer. *Anthroposophy* forms the foundation of my spiritual knowledge. Learning to live with paradox continues to be a challenging teacher.

I thought I would become an architect of social change...

### What I've Learned

- ▶ It's sometimes easier to ask for forgiveness than permission.
- ▶ That which is most personal is universal.
- ▶ Opportunity is a state of mind, not the economy.
- ▶ You can't teach or lead any one somewhere that you haven't been or won't go yourself.
- ▶ You are the instrument of change. Be the change you want to see in the world.

### In Closing

A friend once said to me that a completely explicable life is despicable. To this I say: Trust yourself; trust the process; the best is yet to come.

I wish you good health, happiness, prosperity and wisdom.

