

## **‘Carpe Momento’ – Seize the moment!**

**by Bob ‘Idea Man’ Hooey**

How many of us are so busy planning, scheming, dreaming about the future, or rehashing the past that we miss the moment? If you are like me, you’ve probably been there. Remember waking up one day and wondering what you actually did the day before. You were busy, that you remember, but you can’t remember what you were busy doing. Sound familiar?

Some have heard the phrase, **‘Carpe Diem’ – Seize the Day!** I would venture that we need to go even further than that and **Seize the Moment!– ‘Carpe Momento.’** It is what we do during the moments of each day that contribute to the end result of the day. Was it a good one? Was it one, which left you unsettled, unsatisfied and unproductive? The choice is yours, moment by moment.

In 1913, Sir William Osler was asked to address the students at Yale University. Sir William had earned acclaim by organizing the John Hopkins School of Medicine and being appointed Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford and been Knighted by the King of England. It would appear he had earned the right to share a few ideas with that student body.

He attributed his success to reading something from Thomas Carlyle 40 some years earlier, which had helped him keep focused, and to live in ‘day-tight’ compartments. Carlyle wrote, “Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.”

He shared how he had crossed the Atlantic on an ocean liner, and had seen how it was compartmentalized in case of emergency. How he noticed each compartment could be shut off quickly. He challenged them to live their lives in what he called ‘day-tight’ compartments. He challenged them to ‘Shut off the past.’ And went on to say, “shut off the future as tightly as the past...the future is today.”

I learned first hand about the concept of ‘day-tight’ compartments in the 1980’s, when I went thru a painful and debilitating divorce. A divorce that left me broken, broke, and disillusioned with my life, feeling that I was a failure, and that my life had no real meaning or purpose. I had married later in life, intending to make it a forever commitment – unfortunately forever was only 7 years. I found myself struggling for a sense of purpose, a sense of hope and a sense of understanding. Each day was a chore, each day was a burden, and each day was a disappointment.

I had left the family business when the marriage ended, and I was at a loss for what to do in my life. I saw an ad for a little run down coffeeshop in New Westminster. I drove over, took a peak and negotiated to take it over. It had been closed for 6 months and needed extensive work before I could reopen it. I spent over 6 weeks working on cleaning it up, scrapping, deep cleaning, re-wiring, revamping, remodelling and making sure I had the tools and the menu to reopen. Each day was a struggle both in focus and finances, as I had to battle with my sense of self worth and my idea to recreate something that would provide value. It was heartbreaking work, back breaking too, but when the “Cubbyhole’ Café opened that fall, it became a place where people

who worked in the area and tourists could stop for a break, some good food and some good conversation.

It was not easy as I struggled to build a clientele and to gain exposure in that area of town. I struggled to maintain a positive attitude, to be a gracious host and to warmly welcome my guests each day. There were days I was so tired, so down, that I would pray, “Lord, just help me make it thru to lunch”, or “Lord, help me make it to closing time.” The days blended into each other, and one day I noticed that I had gotten thru the day without crying out. I was gaining confidence and clarity. I had found that each day was taking care of itself as I took care to be in the moment and live it fully.

I sold the ‘Cubbyhole’ a couple of years later and began a consulting practice prior to moving into speaking and training. The lessons I learned at the Cubbyhole will live with me forever. When I focused on being in the moment, in seizing each moment, and wringing out all the life it had, the days took care of themselves.

On Feb 11<sup>th</sup>, 1999 my dad passed away peacefully in his sleep. One moment he was alive and the next he was with the Lord. That moment impacted me even deeper than the loss of my marriage. My dad had been my anchor and my cheerleader. I struggled to deal with this loss and to assist my mom in continuing her life. A bit over six months later, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, I held my mom in my arms and watched as she slipped away. One moment alive and struggling to breath, and the next moment at peace and on her way to meet my dad. I value each moment I spent with mom and dad, over the years. I treasure the moments taken to care for her after dad left us. I would not trade any of them for all the income in the world.

**Last September 11<sup>th</sup>, our world was changed in a moment** when terrorists crashed large Jets into the World Trade Center in New York. Our sense of values was changed, our sense of safety was impacted, and the way we do business was changed – in a moment! We were hard hit in the speaking and training industry as 1000’s of regional meetings and conferences were instantly cancelled. It remains to be seen how the impact will wash out, but many of us are working at maintaining a sense of balance and focus, moment by moment. It is still an uncertain future for our industry, but we are confident that our skills, our words and our experience will still find value in the lives of our potential clients, readers and audiences. **Our voices are still needed!** Life needs to go on, business needs to continue, people’s needs can be cared for!

I was speaking in New Jersey, across the river from NYC, last December and took a morning to travel over and walk around ‘Ground Zero.’ It was a walk of quiet reflection, of being in the moment, and allowing the sense of tragedy and loss to impact me. To stop and read the cards, the ‘have you seen this man?’ notes, look at the pictures of people lost in a moment when the two jets impacted. A chance to take a moment and read the patriotic notes, the declarations of optimism and hope that people from around the world had left on the walls, and fences surrounding the area. To take a moment of reflection and leave my thoughts on the wall, and a dedication that **“I would continue to speak out, to encourage people to live their lives, to give and to gain the riches each moment would bring.”**

Dante wrote, 'Think, this day will never dawn again.' Each moment, when passed is gone forever, lost in the sands of time. Each moment is like a grain of sand which when it has passed thru the narrow neck of the hourglass of our life, cannot be returned or reused. **It is the decisions and the dedication in which we 'invest' our moments in time, which will determine the richness of our legacy.**

Decide today to live in the moment, make each moment count in your life and the lives of those you value. Decide today to let yesterday take care of itself, and to plan for the future, but live for today. **Decide to value yourself and your time highly, and to invest yourself in a worthy cause.**

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