

# Piano on the Beach

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## The Sculpture

One day the sculptor was asked, “How were you able to produce such a refined work of art with only a small hammer and chisel?”

He replied, “Well, I just began as always with a large piece of rock. I visualized the object of my creation inside. Then I simply used the hammer and chisel to chip away at everything that did not belong in my mind’s-eye version of the statue. Eventually, the horse was revealed as I had envisioned it.”

Every time we begin a project or embark on a mission as a leader, we must first get a clear picture in our mind of the final outcome we desire. We need to be able to SEE what an excellent, successful, effective result *looks* like. Only then can we hope to navigate successfully through the distractions and obstacles we will encounter as we “chip away” at those things that do not fit our vision and goal.

This basic principle applies to personal as well as business goals. It applies to both short-term projects, and to major life or career decisions. We must ask:

- What do I ultimately want in order to feel that I have succeeded?
- What does the final goal LOOK like?
- What details will be in place in the final product?
- What will the ultimate description include?

Years ago I was told a story about a young man who was seeking advice from a trusted and wise teacher. He had expressed to his teacher a desire to have a life filled with purpose and fulfillment – a life that “truly mattered”. The teacher asked, “What are your plans, young man?”

The young man replied, “I will complete my basic education and then go to the university.”

The teacher asked, “And then what?”

The young man continued, “Then I will begin my career and get married.”

The teacher again asked, “And then what?”

The young man said with enthusiasm, “Then I will work hard and improve my financial situation and start a family.”

The teacher said, "And then what?"

The young man was beginning to get a little frustrated at the continual repetition of his teacher's question. He said, "I guess I will build wealth and raise my children and think about retirement."

The teacher continued to probe, "And then what?"

The young man said with growing exasperation, "Well, I guess then I will get old and die."

The teacher asked with a sigh, "And then what?"

The young man was thoroughly puzzled and after a few moments of deep thought said quietly, "I don't know after that."

The teacher replied, "Young man, until you have answered that one final question, the others are not very important."

No. I strongly believe it is possible to have real purpose and allow money to be a tool for fulfilling that purpose. In the hands of someone with strong values and noble purpose, wealth and influence can be powerful forces for good. What is required is a new definition of success according to higher values! We need to set our priorities with the end game in mind. We need to make our daily choices and our intermediate goals line up with the "final result" that we envision in our minds.

In the end, success isn't nearly as important as significance. Begin to think in terms of significance. What really COUNTS? What really MATTERS? What will be the hallmarks of your life that become your LEGACY and your ultimate REPUTATION?

Nearly every person I know would consider this to be a good starting profile for a life of significance:

- Strong faith
- A good and solid marriage
- Good health
- Strong family relationships
- Material success based on hard work and right thinking
- A deep sense of satisfaction that your time and effort have been spent in the pursuit of noble values and high ideals

The person who lives a life with these characteristics may not be at the top of the organizational chart...or that person may be! The person who lives a life with this profile may not be a multi-millionaire or that person may be! The person may

not be recognized as a social leader....or that person may be! One thing is certain: A person who lives with this profile of SIGNIFICANCE will be a person who is a sure winner in his or her own heart and mind, and in the hearts and minds of beloved family members and friends.

Without a clear picture of where you want to be and who you want to be, your life will become reactionary at best, at worst, be driven by shallow pursuits that eventually leave you feeling empty, dissatisfied, and unfulfilled.