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## A Compass, Not a Map

*Helping Generation iY Find  
Their Future*

WHENEVER I HAVE TO TRAVEL TO A NEW CITY, I want to have a map or, better yet, a Global Positioning System in my car. These tools can keep me from getting lost and direct me to my destination. I can't tell you how many times I've been in a new territory and that GPS saved me.

There was a time, however, when I found myself in a place where neither a map nor GPS could help. I was in a remote part of Canada where there were no signs and not even any roads. No maps were available for this territory, and if I had had a GPS device—which I didn't—it would have had to furnish directions using landmarks like trees or hills. I was, quite literally, in deep weeds. Conventional tools couldn't help me navigate in that situation. The only tool that could've guided me was a compass.

No matter where you are, a compass can tell you where your true north is. It can direct you when all else fails. And that's what you and I need as we interact with Generation iY today, because we are now in uncharted territory. We've never faced a challenge quite like this rising generation, nor have we faced quite so many baffling questions—including the ones rolling around inside of me as I write this book:

- *Has constant exposure to technology lowered the emotional intelligence of a generation?*
- *Does our kids' premature launch into school (at ages four or five) foster a postponed launch into adulthood (at ages twenty-six or later)?*
- *Is the early affirmation that kids receive from adults causing narcissism and depression for them later on?*

- *Has the increased time playing video games lowered the grades that boys make in school?*
- *Does the heavy access to social media (Facebook, Twitter, and so on) impede the development of mature relational skills?*
- *Have antiquated teaching methods caused a disconnect between adult and student generations?*
- *Do the lies we adults (especially parents) tell our kids actually return to haunt them in the form of anger and disillusionment?*
- *Will the expanded population of Generation iY in a challenged worldwide economy spark violence and antisocial behavior?*

### **A Generation of Firsts**

Stop and reflect. In the same way the parents of the Baby Boomers were the first generation to raise their kids with the one-eyed babysitter—the TV—we are the first generation of parents to raise our kids with the Internet. They have a portable device in their hands 24/7. Culture seeps in and we feel we can do little about it.

These kids are the first generation that:

#### **1. Doesn't need adults to get information.**

Consider how this difference changes the role of an adult. Because information is everywhere, we are no longer brokers of data. They don't need us for *information*, but for *interpretation*. We must help them make sense of all they know. Our job isn't to enable them to access data but to process data and form good decisions.

#### **2. Can broadcast their every thought or emotion to those who follow them.**

You see this every week. Thanks to Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, your kids can send messages to huge populations who matter. They are the new PR for your youth department or your school. Some posts actually get famous...good or bad. Most have not been equipped to harness the megaphone in their hands.

#### **3. Has external stimuli at their fingertips 24/7.**

Because a portable device is in their hand, they receive outside stimulation any time they're bored. Consequently, many don't think well on their own. This outside entertainment may have reduced their internal motivation. They've never had to motivate themselves. They depend on a screen to push them. We must equip them.

#### **4. Is socially connected at all times, but they often connect in isolation.**

This is the most connected generation in history—but perhaps the one who's experienced the least community. They're rarely disconnected, but still they are lonely—and often connect virtually, in isolation, on a screen. Their empathy, soft skills and emotional intelligence are lower because of it. They'll need those skills for life, but they've not been prepared.

#### **5. Will learn more from a portable device than from a classroom.**

This one is a game changer. The portable device they hold in their hand is now the compass that guides them, more than their teachers. They'll consume more data on this device than through any other means. It may be inaccurate or damaging, but it's available, and they digest it. They'll need us to help them navigate this tool.

#### **6. Uses a phone instead of a wristwatch, camera, wall calendar or board game.**

Students no longer manage their lives the way we did growing up. Their phone tells time, provides entertainment, takes pictures, gives directions, connects with friends and broadcasts their messages. Designed to make life simpler, this non-stop information center has made them the most stressed out generation to date.

More than at any time since I began working with students in 1979, I see adults wavering over how to lead, teach, parent, coach, pastor and employ this generation of kids. Theories are everywhere, as research seems to contradict itself on this generation of paradox. Questions loom within us that our parents never faced:

- *Should we limit their cell phone use?*
- *Can we use portable devices in the classroom? Is that good or bad?*
- *Do we become friends with our kids (or students) on Facebook?*
- *How much is too much time playing video games?*
- *Should we make our children play outside?*
- *Where do we draw the line with safety measures?*
- *How do we guard and guide their time on the Internet?*
- *How much freedom should we give our children with their friends?*
- *Do those friends need a background check?*

If you identify with even a bit of what I've described so far, and...

So, here are the big questions: What do we do to steer Generation iY back on course and keep them there? How do we prevent ourselves from being overwhelmed by the problems? Where do we begin to address the issues?

Let me tell you a story that may suggest an answer to this dilemma—or at least a way to approach it.

### Run to the Battle!

In 1862, a young man named Joshua Chamberlain from Bangor, Maine, signed up to fight for the Union army. He had no training as a soldier; in fact, he was a college professor by trade. But there was a civil war going on, and the Union needed him, so he enlisted and was commissioned as a lieutenant colonel.

In the summer of 1863, Chamberlain was ordered to march his troops to Gettysburg in pursuit of General Lee. By this time he was a full colonel and had seen firsthand the horrors of battle and its aftermath. He'd negotiated with disgruntled soldiers, buried the dead, tended the wounded, and prayed with the survivors. He thought he'd seen the worst of war. But more was yet to come.

The Battle of Gettysburg proved devastating for Colonel Chamberlain and his regiment. In wave after wave of confederate attacks, he lost all but eighty of his men and all of his ammunition. But when several of Chamberlain's officers asked when and where they should retreat, he shook his head. *Retreat* was not in his vocabulary. He had the men sit down so he could think.

It was during these hours that the Confederates were joined by two new regiments from Alabama and Texas, and they decided to attack. A Union lookout boy saw them coming and signaled to Colonel Chamberlain.

It was at this point that Joshua Chamberlain commanded his men to do the illogical. You might even call it the impossible. With only eighty men and no ammunition, he sounded the cry to attack. His soldiers were stunned, but they followed his orders, jumped the wall, and ran to the battle.

To the shock of every one of his men, they won. The Confederate soldiers saw those Union soldiers running toward them at full speed, shouting at the top of their lungs, and they became paralyzed. They laid down their guns and surrendered.

Moments afterward, a young Union private was holding a hundred confederate soldiers at gunpoint. When Colonel Chamberlain walked by, the private whispered to his officer, "I don't got no ammunition!" Leaning into him, Josh Chamberlain whispered back, "I know it, but don't tell them that!"

I love that story for many reasons. First and foremost, however, is its pertinence to the challenges we face with Generation iY. We can learn some valuable lessons from Josh Chamberlain:

- *He knew that to sit still and hope for the best was sure death.*
- *He took risks and seized opportunities by choosing to take initiative.*
- *His success came because he approached life as a leader.*
- *His contribution to history was far greater than his job or profession.*

If we could talk to Joshua Chamberlain today, I suspect he'd tell us he shouldn't have been able to do what he did. The odds were stacked against him. Like us, he felt he had little to work with. He had no formal training for what he was required to do. He was outnumbered and out-resourced. But somehow he knew that to run or to hide wouldn't solve the problem. He decided the best defense was a good offense, and history has confirmed his decision.

That's exactly what I believe we adults need to do as we consider the challenges of guiding the next generation. To simply sit still and hope for the best would be disastrous. To run and hide would be worse. We must play offense, not defense. We must take whatever action is necessary to secure a healthy future for our kids and for ourselves.

### The Best Way to Help Them Find Their Way

My premise for the rest of this book is simple. We must prepare Generation iY for the future. The best first step is to enable them to discover their vocation—to recognize their passions and strengths and use them to engage the world around them.

Did you know the word *vocation* is taken from the same root as *vocal*? It means *calling*. The implication is that each of us who have a vocation possess more than a job. It's a mission. To pursue a vocation is to work in a natural "sweet spot" and master it.

When we enable Generation iY to discover their vocation and allow them to think for themselves, that's when they'll become people of influence—true life-giving leaders. This is the compelling message that Generation iY needs to hear. Sadly, all too often we have failed to translate this message. Our message to Generation iY has been more about safety and maintenance than about adventure and calling. We have been protecting them rather than preparing them and coddling them instead of calling them out—challenging them to seize opportunities and make a significant contribution.

We've insisted on playing defense when what we really need to do is forge ahead and equip Generation iY to be our future leaders. If we will, they'll come alive—and have incentive to become the best version of themselves.

### The Wrong Kind of Message

When I began working with students in 1979, I noticed the way adults typically approached kids. It seemed like one message bellowed through schools, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, youth groups, and scouting troops: "stay off drugs and don't get pregnant."

It was a relevant message. We certainly had a drug and teen pregnancy problem in our country, and we tried to address it. Nancy Reagan's famous "Just Say No" campaign in the 1980s focused on preventing kids from doing drugs. By the 1990s, several character-building programs in our elementary and middle schools nationwide begged kids across the nation to be nice, to be respectful and courteous, and not to be bullies.

Those are all noble goals...but they don't cut it anymore. The problem is, they just don't motivate students. Kids are savvy. I have not met a single adolescent who gets motivated by the challenge to "not bully," and "just say no" sounds lame to them.

A defensive message is insufficient. While all the campaigns were well-intentioned, they focused on preventing kids from doing something wrong instead of challenging them to do something right. All we cared about was avoiding trouble. It wasn't enough then, and it certainly isn't enough today.

Consider character-building programs in schools that use a "word of the month" to help kids learn to be good citizens. Beyond elementary school, do you know one student who is engaged by this approach? And while "be nice" and "be courteous" and "be respectful" are good thoughts, will a typical middle school or high school student find those words compelling? I don't think so.

If we want to successfully guide Generation iY into the future, we've got to do more than just challenge them to stop doing bad things. Playing defense just doesn't work. As author Dan Pink describes it in his provocative book, *Drive*, we must move from "Motivation 2.0" to "Motivation 3.0," which is a move from punishment and reward to purpose.<sup>2</sup>

Purpose—that's what we must focus on as we seek to lead Generation iY. We must ignite them with a vision for their future, based on what is inside of them.

Zach Hunter is a vivid example of what can happen when we do that. I've known Zach for ten years now. He's a relatively quiet, unassuming young man, but what's happened with his life is quite remarkable.

As a young teen, Zach became aware of the phenomenon of modern-day slavery. Every year, he learned, millions of children and adults around the world are bought and sold by traffickers who trade them like commodities. Zach was amazed to learn this happens even in the United States. Zach's parents encouraged him to do something more than just write a paper about the slave trade. So, he began to study the issue, go to Web sites, do interviews, and eventually he studied the historical roots of the slave trade. He learned about William Wilberforce, an abolitionist who fought against the slave trade in England back in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Wilberforce became a hero to Zach, a role model. In fact, if you ask Zach Hunter to introduce himself, he'll say, "My name's Zach. I am an abolitionist."

Zach launched a grassroots movement called, "Loose Change to Loosen Chains." He speaks at high schools all over the country, raising money to buy slaves and set them free. He has appeared on CNN, *Good Morning America*, and other national broadcasts, raising awareness and challenging people to step out of their own comfort zones and help. His ultimate goal is to stop slavery entirely. And the movement he started is no longer a small endeavor. Tens of thousands have jumped on board and are involved now.

When I last spoke to Zach, I observed, "You are quite a leader." He looked down and shook his head. Zach Hunter doesn't see himself as a leader, but he is one, and he's effective because he's leading the way in an arena where his passion and strengths lie.

Zach is a young man of stellar character. But he wasn't compelled to be a good boy by some word-of-the-month program. He was challenged to solve a problem, to lead the way and make a difference. And he responded. He said yes to a call... and he's changing the world.

### Called, Not Driven

It's important for me to clarify what I am not saying. When I talk about challenging Generation iY to something great—to a life of contribution—I am not talking about calling them to a driven life. Kids today know better—they realize the lives of driven Baby Boomers are out of balance. A calling may look like "drive" on the outside, but it is an inward passion, not an outward compulsion. It's a burning desire to serve, not to earn; to make a difference, not just a buck.

Liz Worth's life supplies a vivid portrait of what I'm talking about. Liz grew up "instilled with the importance of career aspirations, success and overachieving." So she threw herself into journalism school and also worked nonstop to grab as

much real-work experience as she could. She built her portfolio and then, a few years after graduation, found a great job in a busy PR office. She made lots of friends and found an apartment she loved. “But even though I had accomplished everything I set out to do,” Liz writes, “I constantly found myself thinking: so this is it?...When everything is so contrived, you wake up one day and realize you have the job you wanted, but that job isn’t everything. Not even close.”<sup>3</sup>

I believe Liz speaks for many in Generation iY. They love to throw themselves into something—but they must believe in it. They must feel it makes a difference. For so many iYers, it’s not just about mortgages. Or maintenance. Or money. It’s about a mission.

### **A Work, Not a Job**

Consider this. When you scour the pages of history and discover the people who powerfully affected their world, you find it was people who did more than fulfill a job description well. In fact, many were folks who labored for a cause completely separate from their livelihood.

They were fulfilling a calling, not just drawing a paycheck. They were doing a work, not just a job.

I’m not just playing with words here. There really is a difference. A job is basically a source of income, whereas a work is a calling, a vocation. Consider some of the other distinctions between a job and a work.

- **Jobs are about what we can get. A work is about what we can give (and who we are).** With a job, you basically trade your time and skills for money. Accomplishing a work is more about making a contribution to our world.
- **Jobs come and go, but work ties a life together.** Young people may have six to eight jobs before they reach midlife. Their work, however, should be the single, common thread that runs through each of their jobs. It is the central mission they are accomplishing with their life.
- **Jobs enable us to be consumers, but work enables us to be contributors.** A work can be defined as the most important contribution someone will accomplish before they die. Pursuing a work ignites the passion inside of a person. It harnesses their gifts and causes them to think (and act) long after the job is over.
- **A job is often motivated by competition; a work is usually motivated by compassion.** This represents the primary difference between being driven

- **When people do a job, they walk the mile they are compelled to walk.** When they do a work, they walk the second mile, above the call of duty. In other words, we do a job because we have to, but we do a work because we want to.
- **A job is about selling a product. A work is about solving a problem.** A work is motivated inwardly, which means that motives are purified and collaboration can be intensified. For this reason, a work tends to pull like-minded people forward together.
- **Jobs are about making a living. Work is about leaving a legacy.** If the only thing kids are remembered for is that they made a lot of money or had a good 401K or owned a nice home—will that really be satisfying to them? Not the young adults I know. They are already thinking about how they’ll be remembered. They’re pondering their legacy.

A work is almost always bigger than a job. It is rarely reduced to a job description that someone else asks you to complete. On the other hand, a job can certainly be a place where a person discovers and pursues a work. Ideally, it should be exactly that—a venue for a vision.

It doesn’t always happen that way, of course. Sometimes a person’s calling or work has little to do with the job he or she is holding down at the moment. The job is just a source of much-needed income, though that income may help make the work possible. And iY young people who resist settling for “just a job” may need to face that. Grownups do what’s necessary to put food on the table. In the long run, however, we must help Generation iY to find and do their calling—not just get a job.

### **Five Decisions to Help iYers Find Their Future**

How do we do that? One of the best ways adults can help iY youth find their future is to help them think through five critical decisions. Everyone ends up making these decisions, by default or design. But if they’re made on purpose—and in the right order—they can become a kind of compass to help them steer a course in life. These five decisions are great topics for discussion between students and their parents or mentors.

#### **Decision #1: “What Are My Values?”**

This decision is priority one because values keep a person on course as he or

she pursues their vision. When people fail to determine their values before they pursue their vision, they may compromise the person they want to become. The end will justify the means. They might reach great goals, but at the expense of their moral integrity.

We've all seen leaders who got into trouble when their integrity didn't keep pace with the momentum created by their giftedness. Do you remember the gifted leaders at Enron or WorldCom or Tyco in the first few years of this century? Did you watch Tiger Woods fall from grace in 2010? How about Lance Armstrong in 2013? Or, Ray Rice and dozens of other NFL players who were accused of domestic abuse? These people didn't have a skill problem. They had an integrity problem. Either their values were out of whack, or they didn't live by them.

I firmly believe we must help young people determine their values before we can talk to them meaningfully about their future. This means asking them questions like:

- *What do you want to be remembered for?*
- *What qualities in other people do you most admire?*
- *What statement will be written about you in your obituary?*
- *What are four to six words that most describe the person you wish to be?*

Just as all of us have an IQ (our intelligence quotient) and an EQ (our emotional intelligence), we also have a certain amount of moral intelligence—a sense of right and wrong. For Generation iY this can be a problem. Most believe they are ethical people, and they want to live lives of integrity. But ethics is a mixed bag for them. There is no set of absolute morals or values they all embrace.

According to research done by Northwestern Mutual Life, most Millennials don't trust present leadership in business or government or representatives of organized religion. Generation iY tends to give these leaders a *D-* or an *F* on their moral report card.<sup>4</sup> What's interesting is, according to the same study, most young people believe littering is wrong, but only half of them think it's wrong to exaggerate experience on a resume or not declare income to the IRS. Perhaps they've caught a vision before they've set the values.

The good news, however, is that character can be taught and learned. We all know now that humans are born "lingual," meaning we have the capacity to learn and speak a language. According to social scientists, we are also born with the capacity to be moral. However, just as humans learn language only after being

only if they are exposed to these things. This means we must model positive values and ethics for them as well as work with them to clarify their own values.

### **Decision #2: "What Vision Do I Want to Pursue?"**

The second issue Generation iY must consider is that of vision—their big-picture goal or mental picture of a better tomorrow. This issue is second only to values, because a vision furnishes incentive for every other decision. Once young people embrace a dream for their future, their incentive to finish college, do an internship, or learn new skills is high.

According to our research at Growing Leaders, most young adults have a dream for their lives and their careers—and they tend to dream big. There are exceptions, of course, but I meet more students today who embrace a bigger vision for their future than at any time since I began working with students. In fact, their most common problem is not that they don't have a vision, but that they have seventeen of them. They can become paralyzed by so many ideas. Even with the economic recession, Millennials have remained optimistic about pursuing their dreams.

To help them focus on a central vision (or help them catch one), try discussing questions like:

- *What do you see yourself doing in five years? How about ten years?*
- *What do you most want to accomplish in your lifetime?*
- *If you had no fear of failure, what would you attempt to do?*
- *Of all the goals you considered for yourself, which is most important?*

Young people can be crushed when adults fail to listen and affirm their vision. Far too often we will tell a five-year-old, "You can accomplish big dreams!" But then, when the same kid turns twenty-five, we'll say, "Don't get your hopes up!"

Adolf Hitler entered this world as a promising young leader on April 20, 1889. He was one of three children born to Alois Hitler and Klara Pölzl. Klara was protective and smothering, and Alois was hot-tempered and hard-headed. At age twelve, Adolf told his dad he wanted to be a priest, but Alois firmly rejected this career choice. Later, young Adolf talked about wanting to become an artist. Alois insisted Adolph could never make a living that way.

After Alois Hitler died suddenly in 1903, fifteen-year-old Adolf traveled to Vienna to pursue a career in the fine arts, but the art school rejected him for lack of creativity. He didn't want to return home, so he hung around in homeless

the poor and homeless in Vienna. Finally, after experiencing rejection after rejection in Austria, Hitler decided to return to Germany and enlist in the army. He fought in World War I, and for the first time he felt part of something great—but Germany lost the war. Feeling bitter and defeated, Hitler vowed that one day he would avenge himself and his country. The rest, as they say, is history. I have wondered, over the years, what might have happened if anyone had taken young Adolf Hitler's dreams seriously. What if he'd had an adult to guide him and focus his magnetic personality and big dreams in healthy ways? What would the world have looked like if someone had helped him leverage his vision for a worthwhile cause?

### Decision #3: "What Is My Virtue?"

We often think of *virtue* in terms of morality, but it also means strength. In ancient Greece, the word actually was translated "power." And this, too, is an important issue for Generation iY to grasp. Each of them must ask: What primary strengths do I possess, and how could I use them to improve the world?

I am convinced each of us has a set of strengths. Usually, we possess a primary strength that enables us to add value to a team or an organization as well as work toward fulfilling our personal vision. Authors Marcus Buckingham and Don Clifton identify a "strength" as a combination of talents, gifts, knowledge, and acquired skills.<sup>5</sup> Using our strengths on a given task leads to consistent performance. Matching our primary strength to our daily work can almost feel like magic. When we're working out of our strength, we usually love what we're doing, we're good at it, and we're able to bring value to others.

Think, for example, of Michael Jordan. He decided in high school to pursue basketball, even after he got cut from the varsity team. He intuitively knew basketball was for him. He loved playing it. Though his skills were still unpolished, he was good at it, and he could imagine that one day people would want to see him play. And he was obviously right. Folks eventually paid hundreds of dollars to watch him dunk a ball through a hoop at the United Center in Chicago. No doubt, Michael Jordan is a gifted all-around athlete. He can play a number of sports. But when he plays golf or baseball, he knows he is good, not great. Playing basketball is his primary virtue.

Finding and playing to our strengths is a key to satisfaction in so many areas of life, especially where career is involved. The problem is, most people don't stop to consider this when they're making plans.

When the Gallup organization sought to find out why so few Americans love their jobs, they stumbled onto an interesting insight. Knowing that no job is perfect, that every job has a few components that aren't energizing, they decided that an ideal job was one that allowed the worker to play to his or her strengths at least 75 percent of the time. Then they polled large numbers of American workers to find out how close their jobs came to that ideal. What they discovered was pitiful. Only 20 percent of the workers they polled said that their strengths "are in play every day" in their jobs.<sup>6</sup>

This helps explain why so few people truly flourish in their work. Most people are living out someone else's life—badly. They fail to thrive because they're trying to follow a pattern laid out by someone else. They never discover what they're wired to do, and they never go where they're really supposed to go...because they never stop to ask, what are my virtues, and how can I arrange my life to make the best use of them?

Interestingly enough, though iYers tend to be very self-confident, they often need help determining their primary strength. I've found it's helpful to ask them questions like these:

- *What do I do best?*
- *What do others tell me about my strengths?*
- *What do I enjoy doing the most?*
- *What have I done in the past that really got results?*

Hopefully a young person will find some overlap in their responses to the questions above and pinpoint one significant activity or ability.

This strength—not what pays most, what daddy did, what friends plan to do after college, or even what they like—should guide their choices. When young people make right decisions about their strengths based on right motives, they will thrive.

In my book, *Nurturing the Leader Within Your Child*,<sup>7</sup> I tell the story of a boy named Jimmy. He was a different sort of kid who grew up a bit of a misfit among the neighborhood boys. He much preferred playing in his room than playing baseball or football outside—and much of the time, he was playing with his socks. This seemed strange to his parents, but Jim was very creative using different pairs of socks and other clothing to create characters and tell stories.

Mom and Dad decided to nurture his interest. They got him more socks. Today, I am so glad they did, because Jim Henson grew up and made a living out of playing with socks. He created an entire industry with Muppets, an idea that began in the mind of a kid and grew when he insisted on working out of his strengths.

#### Decision #4: "What's the Best Venue for Me?"

This question is about the location or context in which young people will use their virtues and pursue their visions. It's about *where* they will live and work. Because iY kids tend to value aesthetics and community and are very contextually aware, the *where* can make a big difference in their ability to function at their best. Venue can make or break their careers.

For instance, a student may find that teaching is her strength and may choose to use that virtue in teaching younger children, but the specific venues for this could vary. She could do this in a suburban school, in an urban neighborhood with underprivileged kids, at a Boys and Girls club, a church youth group, or a kids' camp. She may choose to do it in the town where she grew up or across the country.

According to *Time magazine*, young adults aged eighteen to twenty-nine move around a lot. Twenty-five percent of them have had three addresses in the last five years. Twenty-two percent have had four or more addresses in the last five years.<sup>8</sup> The environment, for some, may be as important as what the mission is of the organization. It's quite possible for a young person to be clear about her vision and her virtue and still feel out of place if the venue isn't right. Help them consider these venue questions:

#### Five Decisions to Help Generation iY Find Their Way

1. **Values:** These come first, because they're the moral compass.
2. **Vision:** This usually comes next because it is your blueprint for life.
3. **Virtues:** This is next, since it reveals your best tool to influence and serve.
4. **Venue:** This follows because now you're ready to find a suitable context.
5. **Vehicles:** Finally, you can choose the actions necessary to reach the goal.

- *In what context do my skills and strengths fit best?*
- *With what group of people do I feel most at home?*
- *Are there environments that allow me to be at my best?*
- *Where do my personality and my style seem to flourish?*

Julie was a college student who came to talk to me about once a month. Something wasn't right.

She was confused about her "life calling." In our sessions we went back and forth talking about her passions, her gifts, and the problems she felt compelled to solve. One day, however, we began talking about her opportunities. She had always loved speaking Spanish and was studying it in college. She was using it to tutor high school kids in an ESL program and to volunteer at a local Boys and Girls Club, but she still felt out of place. She wondered if she'd chosen the wrong major in school or just wasn't gifted enough to make a living with her degree.

Then, I asked her what other opportunities she had in front of her. She began revealing how many mission trips she made each year to Mexico, working in Tijuana, San Juan, Mexicali, Cabo San Lucas, and Mexico City. Suddenly, I said the obvious: "Julie, have you considered your best venue to use Spanish might be Mexico?"

Today, Julie is serving as a missionary in Mexico, using her Spanish every day and loving every minute of it. She's now found her vocation...and her perfect venue.

#### Decision #5: "What Vehicles Will I Employ to Help Me Reach My Goal?"

A vehicle is simply a means to reach a destination. Just as a car is a vehicle that carries you to a physical address, a well-chosen action (or actions) can carry young people toward their goals in life. Vehicles, in other words, are the day-to-day choices and activities that will enable a person to fulfill his or her vision. Vehicles have everything to do with the daily grind. They are, essentially, items on a to-do list. And they can only be chosen wisely after values, vision, virtue, and venue have been decided.

The analogy to actual transportation is clear. A car is a vehicle that can transport you to a location if there are roads. Jeeps are better if there are no roads. Neither works very well if you must cross the ocean. In life, vehicles can get you to a place you want to be, but you can only select the appropriate one after you know where you want to go.

I wish you could meet my young friend Micah—a young man with a mission. He graduated from college, as so many do, with a million ideas on what he could do with his life. Like many of his fellow iYers, he moved back home to get his bearings. But what he did after that made his story quite different.

Micah's parents and his mentors advised him to look at the world around him and catch a vision for something he could do to solve a problem in the world—then set to work solving it. Micah grabbed some friends and did just that. They recognized how so many from their generation tend to get stuck in front of a screen, wishing they could make a difference but somehow unable to actually get

it done in the real world. Micah and his team decided to launch a networking Web site called Roov. The entire purpose of the site is to network young adults online, in order to get them offline and actually get involved in the real world. In fact, that's sort of a slogan they use: "Get online so you can get offline and do something."

Users of Roov could connect with new friends who share their passion for underprivileged kids, or for the homeless, or for unwed mothers, or for the environment. Then the new friends arrange to meet and do something together. Roov fans are making connections, but they're not around typical social networking issues like "What's your favorite movie?" or "What did you do last weekend?" Instead, Roov users ask, "What do you like doing or want to do that makes a difference?"

Micah and his friends saw results fast. For instance, a group of people who enjoy an alternative style of music found each other and actually collaborated on an album. Another group began serving underprivileged kids in a rough part of West Dallas. Each of them had felt apprehensive about working there alone, but once they found each other online, they had a team who could back each other up as they worked together. The Roov idea has helped people not only connect, but take action as a team. Since then, Micah has launched other websites and initiatives that connect people, especially Millennials.

You can imagine, of course, that bringing such visions to life can be a little intimidating. Where to begin? This is where vehicles became critical for Micah and his friends. Usually with a group of twenty-somethings, Micah drew up a list of what was necessary to accomplish their vision. Then he began to implement them one by one. They gathered investors, raised money, drew up a business plan, and met with key influencers, hired extra help, and chose how to advertise. And while Roov was a short-lived vision, it became a springboard for other ventures.

Here are some questions Generation iY should be asking regarding vehicles:

- *Once you know your vision, what are the wisest actions to take to fulfill it?*
- *On your "to do" list, what are the top, most productive priorities?*
- *What are possible activities that are tempting but less productive?*
- *What are the next steps you should take to move toward your goal?*

Often, the vehicles are the elements that are forgotten when executing a personal vision. For many, it is easy to come up with a lofty goal and even to

find the right context for their talents. Actually reaching the goal may be another matter entirely. Vehicles insure that the lofty vision gets translated into practical action. If young people execute a good list of vehicles, chances are good they will ultimately fulfill their vision.

### Doing Well and Doing Good

It is my goal to enable Generation iY to *do well*—to navigate their way into adulthood and successfully enter a career. At the same time, I also want to help them *do good*. It's about more than just making money or getting ahead to insure their own success. I believe a satisfying and successful life is one that positively influences others and improves the world in some way—to lead the way in some area and leave behind a positive legacy.

Arthur was a young twenty-something in 1752 who felt the same way. As he wandered the streets of Ireland one night, he noticed all the people who flocked to the pubs each night to get drunk. It was as though they had nothing more to live for than alcohol; their life had no direction.

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*A satisfying and successful life is one that positively influences others and improves the world in some way.*

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Arthur began to think, what if someone could create a beer that was actually healthy to drink? What if it tasted so good that folks would love to drink it? And what if it was so rich in nutrients that they'd have trouble getting drunk on it? This seemed a worthwhile venture to young Arthur.

His godfather had left him a hundred pounds in his will, so Arthur put that money to work and, after four years, had saved enough to begin brewing his "new idea."

In 1759, he acquired a nine-thousand-year lease on a four-acre brewery at St. James Gate. And it wasn't long before Arthur's new recipe made it big. It was originally full of vitamins and so healthy that doctors prescribed it to pregnant women.

You've probably heard of Arthur Guinness's brand of beer. Guinness is now the number-one brand of beer in Ireland, and it's a world-wide icon as well. Yet the success of Arthur's recipe is not the best part of the story.

Sometime later, Arthur recognized there was more good to be done in Ireland. Talking to a friend one day, he inquired of him what he was spending his time on. His friend told him he'd become consumed with the latch key kids of Ireland; there were thousands of orphans without a home—or living in poor conditions. This was all Arthur needed to hear. He began funding the construction of orphanages in Ireland for these children. This, of course, spread his name even further across the country, and soon he was able to “evangelize” others to join him in the cause.

Arthur Guinness is a vivid example of what real work is all about. He made sure he was doing good while he was doing well. As an entrepreneur, he established his commitment to improving the lives of people in communities where Guinness did business. The Guinness Company was one of the first businesses in Ireland to provide proper pensions and healthcare for its employees and their families. Over the years, it has donated land to create public parks and recreation areas and provided low-income housing and educational initiatives. Why? For Arthur Guinness, it was about both money and mission. He possessed both a job and a work. For him, his job and his work provided three outcomes:

- *It improved the world in some way.*
- *It generated revenue to give away.*
- *It provided a platform to empower others.*

May we enable Generation iY to do the same as they steer their way forward into the twenty-first century.

# 11

## The Care and Feeding of a New Generation

*EPIC Ideas for Educating iY Students*

I RECENTLY VISITED A FRIEND WHO RUNS AN ANIMAL CLINIC IN MISSISSIPPI. As she showed me the variety of pets she was caring for in her clinic, she singled out Moe. Moe was quite a character—a temperamental ferret who was recovering from some minor surgery. Generally, ferrets are furry, fast, and always on the move. Moe was, well, unusual. All the other animals loved attention, they were mostly congenial, and they had predictable feeding times and habits. Not Moe—or Moody Moe, as he was dubbed at the clinic.

Moe wouldn't eat the same food as his counterparts—or even at the same time—and what went down often came back up. He was finicky, like a cat. He was lazy, like a cow. At times he was impetuous, like a puppy. And he was always changing, like a chameleon.

Sharon, my vet friend, had quickly discovered she couldn't care for Moe the way she did the other animals. At times, I would hear her talk to him in exasperation: “Okay, Moe, you can just go without. If you won't eat this stuff, I'll give it to someone else. It's up to you.”

But Sharon was determined to meet the daily challenge of figuring out what and when Moe would eat and just how to feed him in a way he would receive it and keep it down. Just two days before my visit, she had hit upon a system that seemed to work. It was all built around the idea of creating incentive for Moe—incentive to eat and be clean. Moody Moe was being fed, groomed, and cared for in spite of himself.

I had to laugh. This scenario seemed all too familiar—because I've met my share of Moody Moes on the high school and college campuses I visit. It's very possible you've met them too.