

HOPE

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H O P E

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This one is for MOM,
She's the greatest gift of all
&
To all the dreamers,
This one is for you too.

Preface

I am so excited about this short (hopefully inspirational) book, entitled *Hope*. This is also the name of the first poem in the book and it has great meaning to me. I hope it will help you recognize your potential, follow your dreams, and just simply appreciate everything around you.

In addition, there are 31 other poems that I hope will inspire you, challenge you, and stop and make you think. That is the ultimate goal of my writings. To be honest, I am far less concerned if you agree or disagree with my writings, I am much more hopeful that it simply forces you to stop and think.

And you will notice that these poems provide the greatest range of topics of anything I have previously written. These include showing livestock, love, friendships, dreams, nature, travels, vacations, teamwork, and of course, LEADERSHIP. After all, of all the things I do, nothing inspires me more than learning leadership. I learn something about it every single day!

In addition to the 32 poems, there are another 75 leadership rhymes. These are the one-liners many of read on Twitter. I try to post a couple every week. These are written as a form of motivation for you (and for me).

I am also so very proud and pleased to introduce two new partners to this book. The first is the very talented Garry Branham. He provided art for some of the poems. You will see his work as you read through the book. Thanks so much, Garry! You are an inspiration to so many of us!

And finally, after four books, my twin bother, Craig and his company are helping me out. I am so excited to announce that Soloshoe Communications is leading the effort for creative layout. I am so happy to be partnering with the creative genius that is my very own twin brother, Craig Boleman. Of course, the real work for this project was performed by the young gun himself, Mr. Michael McCray. ;-) To learn more about this innovative company, click here: <http://www.soloshoe.com/>

In closing, thanks to each and every one of you that have helped make this dream come true. This is book number five and number six is already being a planned.

God bless each of you. I do HOPE you enjoy it.

LEAD ON!

Chris Boleman

I HOPE

I hope you get in the race,
To find your meaningful place.

I hope you forgive,
So you can live.

I hope you can grieve,
Because it means you believe.

I hope in your life's search,
It includes a church.

I hope you also pray,
And it is every day.

I hope you can be wrong,
And bounce back strong.

I hope you are left by the pack,
Only to bounce back.

I hope you are on a team,
That pushes you to dream.

I hope you win and lose a few,
But neither defines you.

I hope you will be low,
Because it helps you grow.

I hope as you rise through the ranks,
You remember to say thanks.

I hope you find love,
So you can rise above.

I hope you truly care,
And this you will share.

I hope....

THE WALL

We have all been there. Face to face with the wall,
That imagery thing that coincides with a fall.

While everyone piles on, we look all around for pity,
When we should really be tough as nails and gritty.

But we don't because we want others to see our pain,
Feeling sorry for ourselves, with nothing to gain.

And when we are down and out, the walls are caving in,
We look to blame all others, instead of looking within.

We think we are all alone and we have failed the test,
We don't understand because we think we gave our best.

Then, in a moment's notice, we realize we are still alive,
And it's from this failure we learn, and it becomes our drive.

Next time we will do better because we now see the light,
Our goals are redefined, and the outlook is now so bright.

So we can pick-up even after the most catastrophic fall,
Its up to us to gather the strength and breakdown this WALL!

BREAKING THROUGH

She slowly awoke, no different than other days,
Her future was dark and bleak in so many ways.

This was her life, a cycle that we've all heard before,
A broken family; with love simply described as poor.

She's the epitome of the character in the song Fast Car.
She too once had a plan, but it just didn't take her very far.

So, she accepted her life convincing herself it was to be,
After all, this was the only cycle she had known or could see.

Her family; both before and now have experienced the same,
Through her eyes, she was just meant to lose the game.

No wins ever. Heck, she would have even settled for a tie,
"Settle." Yep, that was it, as her life just slid right on by.

She watched the world go by accepting her pitiful fate,
No dream, no future, no family, no friends, nor mate.

When out of nowhere came a shaky knock at the door.
There stood a gentle old man, who softly said, "No more."

He had watched her from the street corner for quite a while,
She never once noticed him, not to mention his smile.

"No more of what?" she said in a defeated, broken down voice,
"No more of this...this...nothing...this life....you DO have a choice."

She shook her head and shrugged in her own pessimistic tone,
Closing the door on him, she could only respond with a groan.

He knew not to push, so he just simply walked slowly away
Returning to his spot where he smiled at her day after day.

And every now and then he would knock again on her door,
And over time, they would talk and visit more and more.

He learned of her troubles and she learned about his too.
But the focus was on her as she learned there was much to do.

She was now realizing she finally had someone that cared,
That was his goal as he was helping her to be prepared.

For a life of motivating and helping others along the way,
Her fulfillment would be through service he believed and prayed.

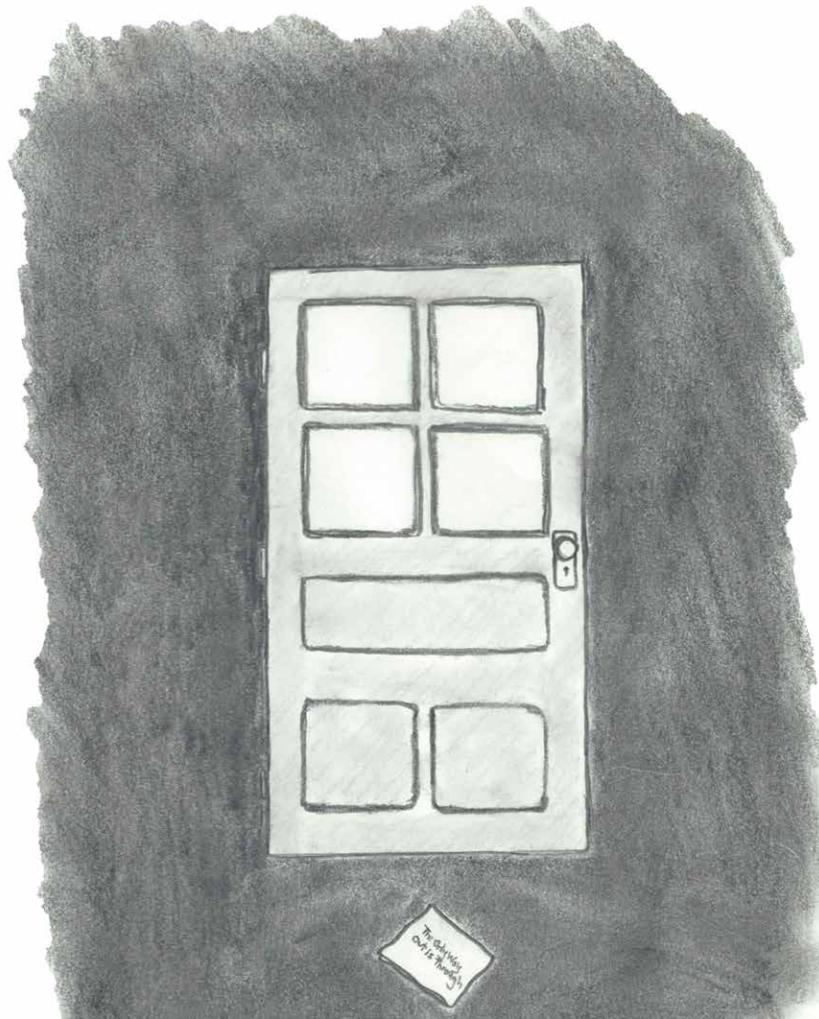
And through his light she was able to stand firmly on two feet,
Instead of looking through that window from her old worn out seat.

He left a final message on that chair with words so powerful and true,
On a napkin with a pencil it read, THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH.

She never knew anything about him; not even his name.
But her success she attributed to him she later acclaimed.

For her, it took one person who challenged her to be her best,
A caring person committed to get her through the mess.

This woman simply confirms a saying we should all apply,
So please say it with me, “You are never too old to try.”



CONNECTING

“But I sent an email to everyone in the company. Did they not get it?”
Molly said very frustrated to the boss in the midst of a small fit.

“I try every single strategy I can to send out the important info,”
She continued, “I even sent this message twice to help let them know.”

Her boss was puzzled as well and his frustration was abundantly clear,
“Darn it! It must be the email system, get the I.T. folks down here!”

“No wait.” A female stranger said entering from out of nowhere.
“Please sir, take a look at the screen on the far wall right over there.”

The boss glanced that direction and wondered out loud, “Who are you?”
“I’m here to help you lead this company, sir. Isn’t what you do?”

“Well of course it is. But it is not my one and only company concern.”
“I know, I know.” The stranger said, “I beg you to listen and learn.”

The screen said, “Hello team leader! It is now time to be your very best!
Take this lesson most seriously so your company can best progress.”

The boss looked frustrated to Molly, and said, “Oh Great! Here we go!”
Shrugging and looking down, “yet another ‘expert’ to help us grow.”

Throwing his hands in the air as if to give up, he sat back to take it all in,
And the first word popped up on the screen in big bright letters: ‘LISTEN.’

Agitated, the boss leaned toward the stranger, cleared his throat and said,
“Yes, listening is the key to transformational leadership. That’s in my head.”

And the stranger quickly responded to that without even missing a beat,
“You are correct sir, but keep in mind that listening is a two way street.”

She continued, “Listening is the first step, but the second is just as great.”
She paused, “As the big boss man, what is your commitment to communicate?”

And now the boss was irritated as he said; “I send emails all the time.”
“Heck ma’am! I am willing to bet I am the best dang ‘emailer’ you will find.”

The female stranger laughed and said, “I am sure you most assuredly are.
But, if that is all you do, then to them you are unapproachable and afar.”

The boss now looked back to Molly, “I think I have heard all I need to hear.”
This is another one of these ‘touchy feely’ leadership coaches I fear.”

He went on, “I have to be better at listening and communicating I guess,”
Continuing, “Molly, get me some coffee while I learn how to be my best.”

Molly exited and was quick to return with a cup made just for him,
She smiled and said, “two sugars and sweet cream filled the brim.”

He took a sip, “Aww perfectly done, Molly. You really do know me.”
And with that the stranger said, “You have now experienced step 3.”

She explained, “Listening is number 1, and communicating is number 2.”
But clearly CONNECTING is what the best leaders really genuinely do.”

“Connecting? Really?” He smirked. “What in the world does that mean?”
She looked him square in the eye saying, “It means you know the team.”

She explained, “And equally as important, they know you just as well,”
“Because you see, Mr. Boss Man, that is the message you have to tell.”

She went on, “If you just listen and communicate you will probably be ok.”
“However if you truly CONNECT, well sir, greatness is not too far away.”

“Take that coffee,” she said pointing, “Molly, knew how to fix it for you.”
“That’s connecting! Now apply this message to your entire team and crew.”

The boss man sat silently looking down slightly embarrassed and ashamed,
He knew deep down the stranger was right. He only had himself to blame.

“Molly, I want to meet with every employee, it is time to re-earn their respect.”
The stranger was gone as he and Molly stared at the screen that said ‘CONNECT.’

WINNER'S PAIN

With each step, you are closing in,
It burns..especially rep 8, 9, and 10.

And while many others just do nothing but sit,
You are working overtime to be healthy and fit.

Sure, not all days are rosy and there is pain,
You stay focused. Remember, no pain, no gain.

And with pain, struggle too will accompany it,
Bet heck, that just makes the prize with 'the get.'

So, let them laugh, point, and hit the snooze,
You stay focused with determination to not lose.

Because you are a winner. Yes, you know it is true,
So stay at it. Because the only way out is through.

FOCUS ON CONNECTING

Technology has resulted in communicating and connecting being far apart,
In today's world, communicating is easy. Its connecting that's the lost art.

Sure, emails, texts, and "liking a Facebook" post keep us in the know,
But it's our eyes fixated on the screen that prevents us to grow.

And to really know and feel each other and finding our passion,
From books, movies, families, faith; heck even our fashion.

It is those items and so much more that define who we are,
And that's connection and it must happen up close versus afar.

Connecting is about our heritage, culture, character, and values,
Add sports teams, friends, hobbies, likes and even dislikes too.

So, go far past communicating if you want your team to grow,
Take the LEAD! Focus on CONNECTING! Come on! LETS GO!

MY

My,
I hate it and don't understand why.

Why people use that word so dang much,
'My this', 'my that.' Well, I think I have a hunch.

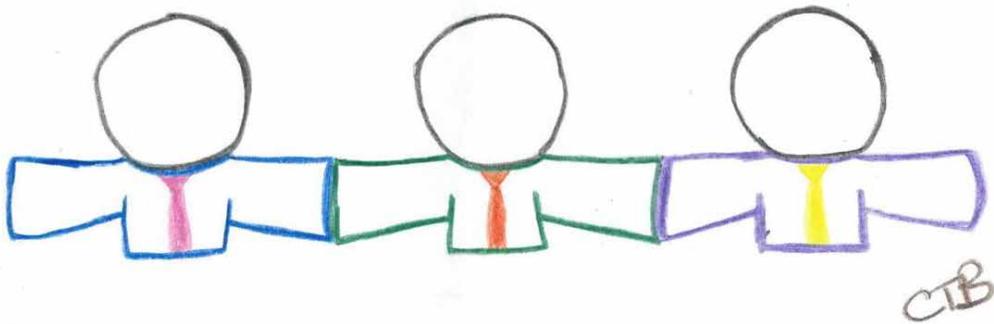
People use 'my' because they don't understand.
That even the most talented singers need a band.

But the 'my people' don't get it at all,
Until something happens and they fail or fall.

That's when they are quick to point out the entire team,
They say, "Look! It was them! It was NOT just me!"

But it is too late because if you say 'my' enough times,
'Your' so-called team is out the door leaving you behind.

So the lesson of this rhyme is to change 'my' to 'WE,'
Then, regardless of the outcome, at least it is a team.



YOU AND ME

They say we are different, but are we really?
Read this below and you might well see.

We both have distinct and defined goals,
Sure they are different, but they build us into pros.

Which leads to dreams. Yeah, we both have them too.
And we push each other in all the things we do.

And we are always together even when we are apart,
We know each other too well. As if we share a heart.

And of course, you dress a little crazy and wild,
While I am a bit more conservative, plain, and mild.

We think that work ethic and happiness will rise above,
And when the cards are stacked against us, we have love.

Some people don't get it. They simply do not see,
Our bond. Our relationship. Our heart. You and me.

EMPTY OR FULL

You have heard it before, so you can ask it with me,
Is that glass sitting over there, half full or half empty?

The answer is not as obvious as it probably should be,
So, lets assign it to some folks to consider, a committee.

They arrive ready to review the facts and make the call,
This debate was set to take place within these four walls.

The optimist was first explaining, "It is clearly half full,"
The pessimist crossing his arms & says, "No! That's bull!"

The mediator stopped them both saying, "Lets wait and hear...
What the others say. They too should speak without fear."

The room went silent as the over-analyzer lifted the glass,
Saying, "if it warms up in here, the water will turn to gas."

That was the perfect time for the water expert to speak,
"The answer of water quality is what we should really seek."

"No, no, no," says the realist who is clearly done with this.
"Does it even matter?" He concluded with a clinched fist.

"Of course," says this historian. "We have to think it through."
Continuing on, he adds, "If we don't consider, then who?"

The non-confrontational one says, "Lets take a short break."
"That way we can think before this decision we have to make."

During the break, the committee members spent time alone,
Checking voice mails, emails, and texts on their smart phone.

When they reconvened the opportunist joined them late,
He was finishing a big deal that simply could not wait.

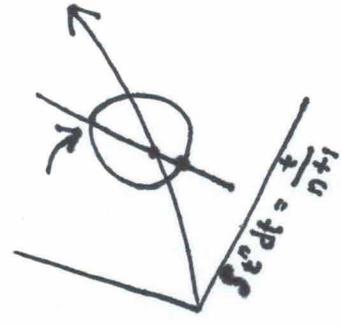
Sitting there, he picked-up the glass, as he listened and learned,
Tilting it, he drank it. The meeting was promptly adjourned.

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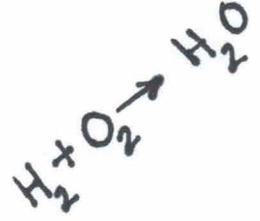
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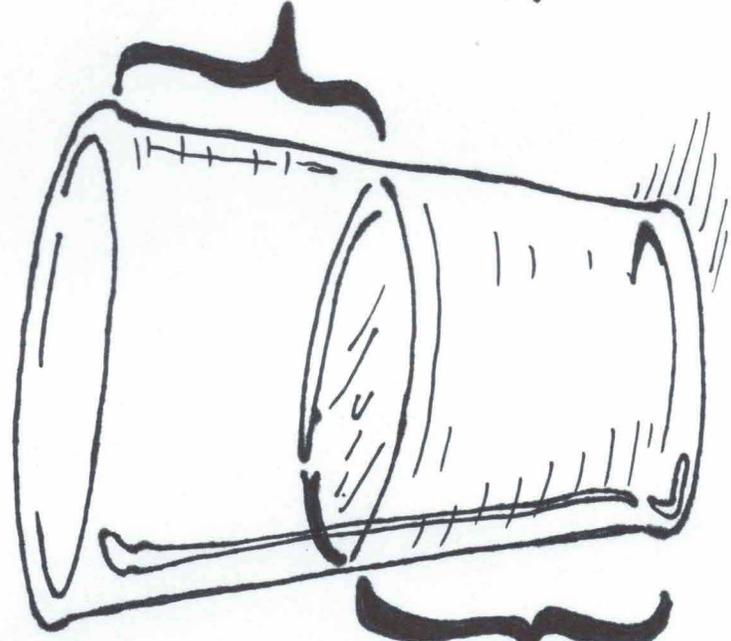
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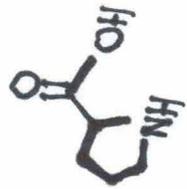


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WELL SPENT

It was left on a restaurant table for the waiter,
He looked at it hoping it would be much greater.

He shrugged, put it in his pocket and on with the day,
Not giving it another thought as he went on his way.

He used it to purchase an energy drink at the store,
Then handed to the next customer as the waiter hit the door.

And it sat stuffed in her purse for a week or possibly two,
It was then given to the lady that headed up the house cleaning crew.

Who quickly handed to one of the young girls in her crew,
She then gave it to her husband as he instructed her to do.

He blew it on junk they most assuredly he did not need,
Shameful man...for him, it was just simply good old greed.

This left it in the hands of the owner of another store,
Every penny counted, he knew what it meant to be poor.

He placed it deep down in his front pocket where it would stay,
Where it burned a hole for countless nights and countless days.

Until a starving puppy walked in his store cold and alone,
Hoping for some love, some support, and meat on a bone.

The storeowner peaked over the counter wondering what to do,
He put that money in the register and grabbed a bag of puppy food.

She ate it all up leaving none in her make shift bowl,
Then laying flat at her daddy's feet licking his exposed toes.

He picked her up and said, "Hope is what I will call you."
"Once I get you cleaned up, you will be as good as new!"

He bathed her in the back of the store, then home they went.
As Lincoln himself had to think, that was \$5 very well spent.

THE MOUNTAIN TOP

It's never a straight line to reach the biggest goals,
There are plenty of dips along the way, even for the pros.

A rough day, a set back, a failure certainly will occur,
It's happened to all champions. I know this for sure.

But it is the setbacks that will push us to new heights,
That is what is needed sometimes to see the light.

And regardless of talent, hard work must accompany too,
No whining, no excuses, winners know this is true.

But knowing the ups and downs is simply not enough,
There's an additional thing to know about this goal setting stuff.

When you reach that goal, take a moment to celebrate,
Smile, shake hands, and hugs for all. It feels so GREAT!

But then it is time to refocus, redirect, and don't stop,
Because reaching the goal is like getting to a mountaintop.

The mountaintop is cold and windy at that altitude,
And you can't survive, so there is only one thing to do.

Come on down! Because that's where the action takes place,
It's where you dream again. Start now, there's no time to waste.

So dream as big as you can and don't settle...not one single bit,
Because the most successful people simply never ever quit.

COURAGE TO TELL

“Where is your place among all those stars?”
He calmly asked pointing up to high, high afar.

“Son, your talent surpasses anyone I’ve ever known,”
Perhaps this calmness would help set the tone.

But the boy just looked down ready for it to end,
It was the same lecture he heard over and over again.

“Don’t you see those other kids are starting to catch you?”
“All because you sit around and hang out with your crew.”

“Your treasure is passing you by day by day by day.”
“Son, are you listening to anything I am trying to say?”

The boy finally broke his silence with a confident, “YES!”
“I hear you, old man. I have heard it before, I’m blessed.”

“But man, you’d never know by the way you talk to me,”
The boy paused focusing on the man’s eyes, “don’t you see?”

“Fix this. Fix that. Oh, and you do all of this wrong, too.”
“Man, I know for sure what the heck I can’t possibly do.”

The man tried to interject, but the boy simply said, “no.”
“Sometimes, I can’t tell if you are a friend or my #1 foe.”

This led to silence, as all they both could do was look down.
Nothing here for either to smile about, all they did was frown.

“Well son, I guess I haven’t thought to stop to appreciate,”
“All you do well. Can’t you see? I just want you to be great!”

“Me too! You have no idea how badly I want to achieve!”
“But I will never get there if I don’t deep down believe.”

“So, old man, today, lets make a new, unbreakable deal,”
“You keep pushing me, but go gentle and take a chill pill,”

They both laughed and agreed with a full, sincere embrace,
The boy said, “Trust me. This talent, I promise not to waste.”

The man closed and said, “I really appreciate you telling me.”
“COURAGE is yet another talent you have and I now see.”



A DOG'S FAVORITE DINNER

The calves were put in the pen the night before,
By the end of this day, they will no longer be bulls.

The decision has been made to turn them into steers,
As their moms look on bellowing from the pasture near.

The sun paints the ranch yellow as the cowboys arrive,
As they prep the day's work while the mist on the grass dries.

The cowboys enter the pen and setup for the workday,
The cow dogs sit anxiously just outside the gate.

And every now and then one of the dogs tries to sneak in,
The cowboy hollers for him to get back or all will be locked in the pen.

This is the day they just sit and watch that silver pan,
They fill it up making sure the steer's jewels don't hit the sand.

As the sun continues to shine and morning turns to afternoon,
The cowboys add to the pan and the calves lick their wounds.

But those dogs' excitement and anxiousness continue to grow,
That pan fills to the top just on the cusp of overflow.

As the day wraps up and all the bulls are now officially steers,
The cowboys take the pan to the porch and grab the cooking gear.

And as the pieces from the pan are fried, some thick and some thinner,
They toss the dogs a few without the batter, this is their favorite dinner.

SHOWING NO FEAR

The announcer said their ages had to range from eight to ten,
And as they entered the ring, they definitely had come to win.

It was a climatic moment as the spectators packed the stands,
I am not even sure these kids knew they had so many fans.

These youngsters spent the last hour watching the older kids try their luck,
Now it time for them to get their shot at getting their heifers stuck.

As they entered the ring, I knew I was going to be in for a competitive show,
From the boys in their crisp button down shirts to the girls with bright hair bows.

All nine of them led their heifers and set them up for me on a rear view,
As I walked behind them, all feet were set perfectly; they loined them too.

As I made my informal greeting to ask them their heifer's age,
They promptly responded as if they had been practicing on stage.

This was their stage and it was obvious they had been rehearsing for some time,
They had been practicing at home every day no matter, rain, sleet, or shine.

As the judge, my proudest moment was when I asked them if they were each okay.
"YES SIR," all said. Where else would we hear that response from youth of today?

After they walked the heifers, it was time to set them up on the side view,
As expected, they got them set as they watched me, they knew exactly what to do.

As the competition continued, they began to sort themselves out,
Even so, as we got to the top three, their showmanship skills were stout.

I decided to walk these three one last time to see who would crater under pressure,
I even asked them a difficult question to see if that would be their stressor.

As my gut told me, these three continued to show at the highest of levels,
I jut kept staring at them thinking, "what am I going to do with these little devils?"

I ultimately made my final placing and went to the mic to defend what I had done,
It was then I realized as I looked back at the kids, heck they were having fun!

The audience was applauding, cameras were flashing, and the kids smiled ear to ear,
Here these little ones stand, holding these heifers as they displayed no sign of fear.

CREATIVITY

I have definitely decided that the word “creativity” is very scary to some,
It may mean that people think different, and to them that might seem dumb.

I do think it is critical that organizations make specific creative time,
You know, to think outside the box and write ideas outside the lines.

Now, creativity does not mean that these new ideas will always work,
But talking about innovations and new dreams certainly does not hurt.

I mean a perfect example of a total flop was the introduction of “New Coke[®],”
Who doesn’t remember that; it ended up being a complete and total joke.

That should never discourage organizations from trying something new,
It just has to be researched very well and not implemented too soon.

One man that took creativity to a whole new level was Martin Luther King,
His creative inspiration was equality and he framed it as his dream.

Apple[®], Lexus[®], Crocs[®] and our favorite coffee company Starbucks[®],
These companies did not get ahead because of just good ol’ blind luck.

Their innovations were not wild guesses and/or shots in the wind,
They researched and piloted their ideas over and over, again and again.

All of their ideas started with creativity coupled with a group brainstorm,
This was followed up with a model for change as the new ideas formed.

For some reason, people think the creative folks are artists and singers,
When in fact, for organizations to stay ahead, they better be the leaders.

Keep in mind there is really one thing organizations know for certain,
If everyone continues to do it the same old way; all will be hurting.

So, if you work somewhere and have a creative idea to run by the boss,
Have some confidence and go for it; keeping it to yourself is the real loss.

TREE

I was certainly sad as I approached it that late July night,
I knew I had to cut it down, but it just didn't feel right.

I confirmed it was dead as I barely touched it and off came the bark,
I guess man can control a lot, but mother nature still leaves her mark.

This record-breaking drought won the battle with this ol' tree,
I looked at it and marveled at all things it had watched and seen.

From people before us, to the cattle that used this tree for shade,
Sitting under it during hot summer days, those cattle had it made.

I doubt anyone ever even noticed this tree when it was alive,
Though we passed it everyday on our morning and afternoon drives.

I guess as I think about it, this tree is a symbol of our world today
We all live in our sandboxes and that is where we work and play.

So for this tree, get out of that box and see things both far and wide,
It won't be long until your leaves fall off realizing you missed the ride.

And before I end this, I have to tell you what happened next spring season,
Up popped new life in that spot proving everything happens for a reason.



THOSE MOMENTS

A fuzzy, friendly squirrel scampering up an oak tree,
A blossoming spring flower under a free falling bee.

A lazy Sunday drive with your hair and windows down,
Artistic and strikingly bright spring scenes all around.

Your favorite ice-cold soft drink with just a splash of lime,
Finding the most fitting word to finish off a new rhyme.

The indescribable aroma of freshly cut lawn grass,
Crossing the finish line of your first 5K, even if you're last.

A hug from mom because it has simply been so long,
Singing out loud to your all time favorite singer's song.

Seeing the hard work payoff after taking an all time risk,
Sitting at Fenway Park and checking it off your bucket list.

That feeling just after your first date goes perfectly right,
When you look to the sky and a rainbow catches your sight.

A small town stadium shining with Friday night lights,
Cuddling next to the fireplace on a cold winter's night.

A newborn baby calf being licked by its loving mother,
A game winning basketball shot against your big brother.

That first sip of a supremely brewed cup of hot coffee,
A team finally coming together seeing the power of 'we.'

Pulling into the driveway after a long, tiring, work trip,
And getting that welcome home kiss right on the lips.

So enjoy the moment as it happens, right now, right here,
You don't have to wait and try to remember over the years.

SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT SHOE

I am not one-hundred percent sure about any of you,
But, I spend a lot of time searching for the perfect shoe.

I guess my wife does too if you want to know the facts,
I counted 70 pairs she has in our closet stack by stack.

Every time I buy a pair, I am convinced these are the ones,
Then I wear them and realize they are not all that fun.

I watch others walk around and wonder if they have it right,
Then I see them loosening shoe strings, I guess their too tight.

I've tried all kinds, tennis shoes, boots, sandals, and dress shoes,
Even different kinds of socks that I was convinced would help too.

But nothing has worked so I continue with this life long quest,
I am just looking for one darn pair of shoes that will work best.

It makes me appreciate day's end when I hit the back door,
I can toss those darn things off and throw them on the floor.

So, with that I am back to the mall to see what I can do,
Happy to take any advice on finding the perfect fitting shoe.

And I will leave you with one question and it might save my life,
I wonder if I can borrow any closet space from my lovely wife?

H A T E

Hate is a ridiculously disastrous, destructive word,
And of course, its feeling is even more absurd.

At best, hate simply hurts someone's feelings,
At worst, it could be someone's life it's stealing.

Hate makes people think it is the end of their life.
It cuts profoundly deep, like a twelve inch knife.

Leaving all of us with unmentionable battle scars,
With even more disdain, loathing, and broken hearts.

Even though deep down, we know hate is wrong.
We can't help ourselves, we just refuse to get along.

It forces us to create an atmosphere of us vs. them,
Promoting people to choose violence to earn a win.

So, instead of learning lessons, we continue to fight,
Refusing to see shades of gray; only black and white.

Unfortunately, the world still will not stand united,
Still set on our traditional ways, focused on fightin'.

I guess I would think we would learn from history,
But we don't; and that is clearly what frightens me.

THE FARMER'S SUPER BOWL

Well, it is Super Bowl Sunday once again,
Time to enjoy the game and to be a fan,

But let me remind you of a couple of things,
Like chips, dips, hamburgers, and chicken wings.

Remember, they all have one thing they share,
It started with a farmer who unconditionally cared.

The farmer loves and cares for that crop just for you.
Ensuring food safety and environmental safety too.

And on the field and that perfected green grass,
Allowing the players to cut, tackle, and run fast.

A farmer spent hours seeding and growing the field too,
With a lot a help from the grounds keeping crew.

And that football made of pig skin so pure?
Deflated or not, that ball is ag to the very core.

So, as you dip your corn or potato chip,
And you then move it close to your lips.

Take one second to utter these words so true,
THANK YOU Mr and Mrs Farmer for all that you do.

LEADERSHIP DEFINED

Leadership is a most difficult one to define and describe,
Here are my thoughts if you will allow me to confide.

With leadership, you have to know what it means to you,
Because there are millions of definitions and most are true.

And that's the key component every leader has to understand,
I'll try to describe what it means to me as best as I possibly can.

It starts with being purposefully positive & we'll go from there,
A catalyst of energy & willing to get away from the desk and chair.

A sincerely passionate person always willing to care and learn,
Knowing when to respectfully listen and speak when it's your turn.

A person that can transcend others to reach the highest of heights,
Seeing the good and excellence in others that aren't even in their sites.

The willingness to sacrifice themselves so others don't have to fear,
Knowing their decisions may take courage rewarded by very few cheers.

But great leaders go on because the ultimate success is progress,
It's their calling and duty to ensure those around them don't regress.

They are the ones that see all challenges as genuine opportunities,
Finding the brightest colors in darkest times is their responsibility.

Green, yellow, bright blue, pink, red, turquoise, silver, and even gold,
They paint with the utmost confidence of being courageous and bold.

And the last description is "respect," and I urge you to not forget that one,
Without respect for yourself and others, this leadership thing is no fun.

And that's what it means to me, so I guess it is now simply up to you,
Promise me you will consider some of this as you lead others too.

CONTAGIOUS

People associate the word contagious with something bad,
It could be a disease, losing, virus or really anything sad.

What if contagious meant something that is truly positive?
Don't you think all of us can join forces to be responsive?

How about starting each day with a laugh and a big smile?
Wouldn't it be cool if that became the new and hip style?

And are you willing to show someone what they're doing right?
It could be what someone needs to move from darkness to light.

Then, challenge that someone to go and do the very same,
Igniting a positive movement versus negativity and blame.

This stops things like spreading senseless gossip around town,
Instead we now help each other when we fall to the ground,

This idea could lead to new highs versus a downward spiral,
Even news anchors can report positive stories that go viral.

Now, please know this idea will never happen with one guy,
It will take a committed team to move this forward and fly.

And that will engage a multiplier effect to grow worldwide,
Can you imagine everyone working together, side by side?

Could it lead to people moving forward as one, arm-and-arm?
I'm not sure, but it certainly would not do any more harm.

So, the question is, "can we take this innovative idea all the way?"
We'll never know unless we start this contagious quest today!

TEXAS WITH A CAPITAL "O"

Howdy fellow Texans and away we go,
This is a poem about Texas don't you know?

I think you will like this one if I dare say so,
It's about Texas; home for cattle, oil and rodeos.

No matter if you live at the top of the state or down low,
The Lone Star State has so much to offer and show.

Lets jump in and start up top in windy Amarillo,
Or we go way down low to the cultured Laredo,

How about my old man's hometown of Waco?
Then travel down I-35 to see San Antonio.

That's where you can see the historic Alamo,
And the riverwalk, great shops, or take in a show.

Head west to see some sheep in old Del Rio,
Keep heading west to a new time zone in El Paso.

Then come back south for cowboy towns like Cuero,
Keep south to Refugio or all the way down to San Benito.

If you don't like those, try Alto, Hillsboro, or San Angelo,
Or Hico, Milano, Cisco, Frisco, or that high class Plano.

Those folks in California can keep cities like San Diego,
And Haight-Ashbury in picturesque San Francisco,

Texas has all the cool places to see I hope you now know,
So, get out the map and hit the highways, it's time to go!

AS SHE SLEEPS

I believe it is critically important to sit and engage in reflection,
I typically think about my wife; she is absolutely perfection.

Right now, I am just observing her next to me as she sleeps,
The alarm has not yet sounded so I watch her before it beeps.

I am the morning person so I watch her sleep almost every day,
Tell me there are thousands more mornings; that's what I pray.

She is the red head from south Texas that God helped me find,
A girl I can share a greasy burger with or a glass of fine wine.

She is one of the most determined people I have ever known,
Determination is just one thing we share and it does set the tone.

We also like to smile, laugh, work, play, and see each other succeed,
We share the same interests like concerts and movies on the big screen.

She is my clothing advisor and most known for picking out my ties,
Of course, no matter how bright, nothing compares to her blue eyes.

What she doesn't know is that I could not do anything without her,
If it wasn't for her always pushing me, I would probably be a failure.

And I think what I love best about her is that she really has no clue,
She is so real, so loving, and my unconditional love for her is so true.

She is the most precious, funny, confident person I have in my life,
My world is splendidly complete because of my most perfect wife.

So, sleep well Dr. Randi Boleman, the alarm is just about to ring,
Our love for each other will conquer all, no matter what the day brings.

AN ATHLETE'S DECISION

When the lights are on, his talent and ability stands above all of them,
But when the lights go out, we cannot fathom what it means to be him.

He is the star athlete; the center of attention for all his hometown fans,
While he is running and throwing down the field, he's clearly the man.

So much so, he actually forgets about the problems in his troubled home,
And that's one of the reasons he can play so well and stay in the zone.

Another athletic run between the tackles ends with yet another score,
The high fives, jumps, and hollers as his teammates and the crowd roars.

The night ends with a victory and they all celebrate with their superstar,
Now he begins to think about his mom slumped over at some local bar.

And as the television cameras and the reporters finish his interviews,
His teammates go home with family and he knows what he has to do.

He imagines them laying down in their beds; they are safe and secure,
As he tries to figure out what bar she is in and what he will endure.

Now in his street clothes, he walks alone down the pitched dark streets,
He's sore from some vicious hits from the game; from his head to his feet.

When he finds her, he hits his knees and cries; this is his lowest of lows,
His night started with an ultimate high; now he is lost, nowhere to go.

As he reaches for her, he contemplates why his life is just no fun,
She turns from her empty glass, looking up and begs him not to run.

Time stops for him as he stares at her as he realizes he is on the brink,
His future is right in front of him, there is no way he takes a sip of that drink.

SOUTH ON 287

There are driving songs about traveling Texas and especially I-35,
This morning, it is all about my peaceful and tranquil 287 drive.

It is still pitch dark when I stop for coffee in Claude at a gas station,
There sits two farmers talking drought and then asking my destination.

Back in the truck, I head on down this rural and majestic highway,
Running along side of railroad tracks and few truckers on this day.

As I am driving, I see the sunrise offering beauty and natural light,
Even though this is a long drive, I smile knowing it's going to be alright.

I can't help but notice the inviting and welcoming signs in each town,
Local pride about their community events is plastered all around.

This drive is littered with wheat fields, croplands, and grain bins,
Other notables are feedlots, dairies, ranches, and even roping pens.

Each of these small towns is unique and their differences are great,
One thing they share is images of the Texas flag; they love this state.

The continuous rise of the sun offers an unusually beautiful brightness,
As I approach one of the big cities on this highway, the city of Childress.

There sits a Wal-Mart, Sonic, McDonalds, and a Holiday Inn Express,
But, I prefer the smaller towns on each side, their local pride is best.

All of those small towns have a local identity and at least one traffic light,
An inconvenience to some; but it forced me to view these local sights.

As the morning turns from dark to light, traffic picks-up on this drive,
I am a little sad because I am now sharing my road four lanes wide.

The towns are now bigger, and Ft. Worth is now just a few miles away,
My calm, and easy-going drive is almost over; a little sad I have to say.

Amarillo, Claude, Memphis, Childress, Quanah, Vernon, and the falls,
Henrietta, Bowie, Dekatur, and Ft. Worth are the towns I best recall.

The 287 drive started with truckers and a sky that is pitch black,
As it merges to I-35 the fast paced and real world is officially back.

THE BEST OF FRIENDS

I will fully admit, I really don't have a lot of truly close friends,
I think it's because of what I learned in life and where I have been.

For me, true genuine friends are the ones built exclusively on trust,
Without it, I am confident it will be short lived and surely a bust.

Now, I am blessed to have a family that is much closer than most,
And I am also most fortunate to have a true best friend to boast.

Kids that show livestock together simply develop bonds that are strong,
We win and lose; regardless we can talk about why the judge is wrong.

Shoot, talking, evaluating, and judging livestock was our entire world,
Heck, we would rather talk bulls and heifers, we almost forgot about girls.

Luckily our two girls saw through our narrow thoughts and found us,
Without them we might have been old men that just sit around and fuss.

Now you should know that this friendship was not perfectly right,
Most basketball, monopoly, and video games did in fact end in a fight.

But the sun would always come up the next day and we were over it,
There were just simply too many cattle to judge, feed, rinse, and fit.

And that work ethic and caring approach are what is in our hearts,
And that is why our bond and decades long friendship will not part.

So, with that I guess it is time for me to close this friendship rhyme,
Lets toast to the past, present, and future; here's to the good times!

THE ANONYMOUS LETTER

It seems to always make it worse instead of better,
The submission of the infamous anonymous letter.

Usually mailed to the boss' boss to make a case,
Too cowardly to sign to put a name with a face.

Instead, the author chooses to mail it and hide,
Leaving us to ponder who felt the need to confide?

And why even write it if one decides not to sign?
Is there truth to the message or is this just a whine?

And for us leaders, the truth is we will never know,
We will keep grinding with our heads high versus low.

But the better question is why do we worry about it?
Since it's unsigned, the trashcan is where it should sit.

But the letter still bothers us as we toss and turn in bed,
Until we finally do what is best, it feels so good to shred!

GOD'S VOICE IN MAUI

I have to admit, I was awfully excited about our vacation to Maui,
I most looked forward to sitting on the beach; hoping my mind would be free.

And my beach hopes and dreams were certainly coming true,
I doubt there are any places this beautiful; if there are, it is a few.

One thing that was as clear as the water, I quickly became a Maui fan,
For me the best part was when we took a trip to the other side of the island.

It was then I learned that it was not the beaches that made Maui,
It was the vegetation, the waterfalls, and the gorgeous valleys.

And there was one particular valley that stood out from the rest,
What I didn't know was that this valley was God's way of giving me a test.

When I peaked over the valley, I saw two churches, both topped with a cross,
It was a sight of indescribable beauty forcing me to stop and pause.

As I stood there admiring it and the lush vegetation and the purity of the green hues,
Out of nowhere came a sign from God and his message told me what to do.

I got in that rent car and the steering wheel turned on the first road to the right,
The only way I can possibly describe it is that God was showing me the light.

As I pulled up to the first church, I read the name, "St. Gabriel's Mission,"
It was brown, trimmed in green, with an old rusty roof made of tin.

Interestingly, the entire church was trimmed in a vibrant, colorful green,
How fitting since Christianity says this color means plant life and spring.

As I entered the church, it was clear that it was old as I sat in a wooden pew,
I imagined it on a Sunday morning and figured it probably drew very few.

For me it was magical and without thinking I looked down and started a prayer,
God's spirit was obviously in this place; it didn't need any extra added flair.

I sat there in prayer for a while and soaked his spirit in as long as I could,
I finally rose from the pew, soaked in the atmosphere as I just stood.

As I walked to the door, I knew this message he would ask me to share,
God shows up in the most mysterious places to tell you he truly cares.

The entire Maui vacation is something I will always treasure,
The beaches, the weather, the flowers, it was indeed a pleasure.

And I am sure the island of Maui is beautiful as I saw it no matter the time of year,
But for me, the most majestic was that old church, God made that abundantly clear.

THE LONELY DINNER

He was still in complete denial and that is exactly what he was thinking,
As he stared blankly into that cup of warm, black coffee he was drinking.

He pondered what was darker at that moment the coffee or his empty soul,
He should be beginning to get over this ordeal, at least that is what he was told.

His only interruption was when the waitress asked if he wanted a refill,
He nodded and she poured, as she also went ahead and slid him the bill.

He wondered as he looked around this lonely diner, did anyone even care?
Just like that; his life was now just as empty and to him this was so unfair.

Had it really already been two weeks since he placed her in the ground?
By now it was just him; as all others returned to their lives in their own towns.

For 40 years they thought they had planned everything they did so right,
His whole life he saw things in shades of gray, but her death was black and white.

Now as he sits alone in this quiet and dark diner, this is his reality of life,
He was angry, mad, confused and lost without his one true love, his wife.

As he sat there sipping that coffee, he tried to remember the good times,
From the day their babies were born and every Christmas when the bells chimed.

But, he was also facing his awful reality and he was not ready to move on yet,
He was still fixated on memories of her, and that cold, rainy day they met.

He knew if she was there she would tell him to just snap of it;
She would smile and say, “get movin – your attitude is the pits.”

His dark depression was because he awaited her message to hear or see,
Even though he knew he couldn’t hear her until he rejoined her for eternity.

He even looked up to the heavens asking the lord to take him to be with her,
He begged his lord and savior, please tell me what you are waiting for?

He eventually got up from that table and bid the waitress a good night,
“Hug your loved ones when you get home, Miss, don’t let them out of your sight.”

As he left, he remembered being told that behind every man is a perfect woman,
He now knew it was not behind him, it was next to him and he missed his #1 fan.

THE DAY THAT CHANGED US ALL

I still remember exactly where I was that most memorable day, do you?
The day in this country's history we didn't know we could make it through.

It was the day the Pentagon, Flight 93, and the Twin Towers had new meaning,
And for many of us, our new sense of love for America was truly beginning.

Those cowardly extremists committed the ultimate and most sinful of sins.
Their gutless attack on America resulted in killing way too many women and men.

They hypothesized that their vile acts would break each and every one of us,
Instead, these acts of terror woke-up this nation in this most obvious time of crisis.

9/11 signaled two things for America; the first was a new global war,
The second was a sense of patriotism that all of us felt to our most inner core.

Nationwide, we all stepped up and did our best to give a sincere helping hand,
Our goal was to give back to the very best country while becoming a better man.

In actuality, these acts introduced a new "Generation of Patriots" that we all know,
From Todd Beamer's phrase of "Lets Roll" to volunteers showing up at Ground Zero.

People all over this country rose up as one and we were completely unified,
The goal? To make sure all of America was strong and no more would have to die.

That day forced most of us to realize just how small this planet realize is,
But also how strong the American people are; grown-ups and even kids.

That day was also such a wake-up call for so many of us and that's not wrong,
Millions of us even have a deeper understanding of our favorite patriotic songs.

Songs like "God Bless America" have a new meaning as we all stand and sing,
It reminds us of our country's strengths and how freedom truly does ring.

Those breathtaking new twin towers are a symbol of America's resurrection,
It signifies that this country is on top and that is a fact, NOT at all fiction.

Freedom, love, and respect for each other are now more important than ever,
Words cannot express our thanks for those lost that day; we will forget NEVER.

FROM THIS BARN'S VIEW

This is finally the day I just knew I was gonna hate,
The last time you will ever lock that front gate.

The trailer is loaded with everything you need,
Livestock, lounge chairs, buckets, hay, and feed.

And as you pull away, this I want you to know,
It's been my genuine pleasure to watch you grow.

I remember the first project. It was a Berk Pig,
You were so small and he grew to be so big.

Then came a lamb, a goat, a heifer, and a steer,
It seemed I grew bigger too from year to year.

More stall space, more shelter, and more pens,
Add a wash rack, electricity and other odds & ends.

I watched you struggle, fight, and learn to fail,
You kept working the project from head to tail.

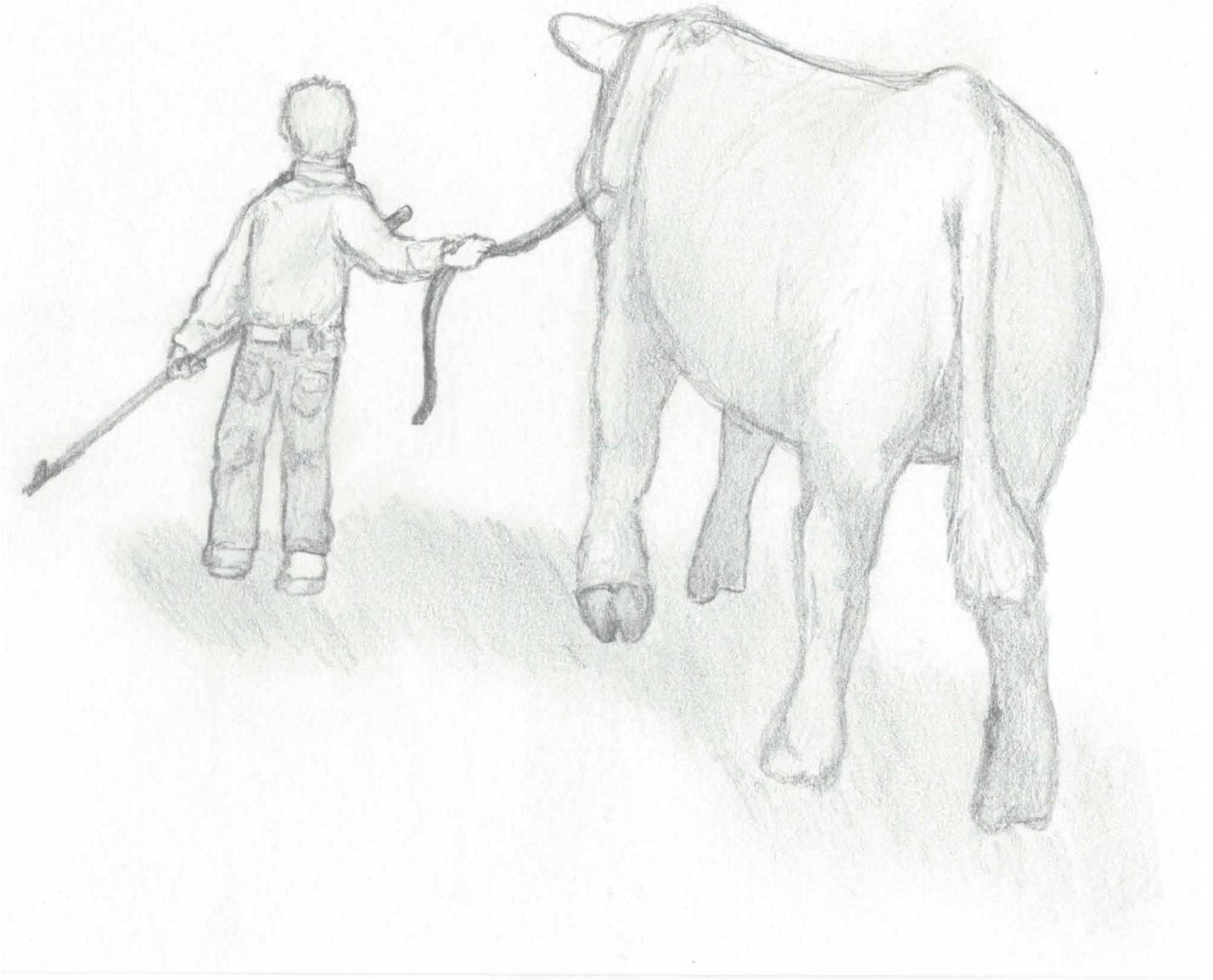
And each year you learned and grew a bit more,
All in an effort for you to succeed and soar.

Heck, you have even learned what this all about,
YOUR personal skill set....that's what you figured out.

Skills like responsibility, goals, safety, and health,
It is not just the ribbons; it's really bettering yourself.

So, load up and head out to one last livestock show,
You started as a rookie, but you leave as an all pro.

But when you get back please come down and see me,
I am still and will always be your barn, even if empty.





LEADERSHIP
RHYMES

- Here is some very valuable leadership stuff, the best leaders know they have to be tender but tough.
- Help others by giving them lift...because remember, positive reinforcement is a gift!
- Here is something to share with all your nay-saying peers! Blind optimism is a heck of a lot more important than deaf ears.
- You are not perfect so it is fine to admit your mistakes, Besides laughing at yourself aint such a bad trait!
- Yes, sometimes it is easier to work by yourself...the problem is it comes at the expense of organizational health.
- You decide to dream big or think small, So contemplate in your mind, only you make the call.
- Here is some really great advice for you, when you accept the task, follow through!
- When working with teams of any size, remember this advice, Never forget that is the team member, you must be willing to sacrifice.
- How do you know that you have a leadership win? When you are satisfied when YOU look within.
- Here is a leadership lesson to deliver, It is just so darn good to be a giver.
- If you are waiting on perfection before implementing the plan, Then you might as well just stay seated, there is no reason to stand.
- In the mood to get back on track? Ask and LISTEN for honest feedback.
- You want to set out on a new journey or destination? Tell your boss, it starts with a conversation.
- Want to start Monday on fire? Set a course and know what you desire!
- It is about progress. Sometimes fast and sometimes slow. Disregard the pace, as long as it is a forward flow

- I have an ego, you have an ego, we all have egos; The question is, “are we willing to set aside for all of us to grow.”
- Most can sit quietly and most likely survive, But leaders make people come ALIVE!
- Laugh at yourself because you ain't perfect. None of us are, last time I checked.
- Even on today's fast paced earth, Caring still defines your worth.
- In this fast paced world here's a message to share, Slow down and remember to give and care.
- It will not always go as planned, All you can do is control what you can.
- Decisions are based on big data and statistics, just don't forget about values and ethics.
- Make a point to never ignore.... those that have been there and did it before.
- While we sit and postpone, life passes us by; so what will it be? Sit there or at least give it your best try?
- Pay attention, lean forward and listen close, it keeps everyone in the room on their toes.
- It's really not that people don't like change; to them, its just without great leadership, it might seem strange.
- People follow leaders because they “want to” OR because they “have to.” If you are being followed because “they have to” then you have a lot of work to do.
- Here is something to consider as you work to prep, Challenges are only there to help you appreciate the next step.
- A quick item to do your part, never forget to lead with heart.
- Challenges are nothing more than opportunities if you ask me; if you think different and creatively, you too will see.
- Leadership is about purposefulness and intentions, coupled with love, communication, and vision.

- Don't use all your energy to be down and mope, replace it by channeling with a message of hope.
- The leadership window will eventually close on all of us, will they remember the path you plowed or just the dust?
- Feeling confused and wondering what to do? Remember, the only way out is through.
- To all the farmers, let's stand and applaud; with a smile, a nod and a tip of the hat to God.
- While some are defeated when their idea receives a no, others are off to re-think it and away they go!
- Here is a leadership tool I can certainly promote, Nothing beats a genuine, hand written thank you note.
- Need a strategy to change a negative attitude? Promote positivity through genuine gratitude.
- Get after what's most got you burning, And make it a priority this beautiful morning.
- Listening is good, communicating is better, but CONNECTING makes you the best leader forever!
- Team colors are important and today it is red, white, and blue! So, thank a veteran for all they did so you can be free to do what you do!
- Looking to give the most perfect leadership gift, Provide someone a compliment, it gives them a lift.
- Here is a trick you can place in your leadership file, When you are down and out, surprise yourself with a smile!
- Limiting yourself is your own personal shortfall, so set the goal one step further and stand tall.
- Worried that you might be led astray, take responsibility and LEAD your way!
- Here is a simple step to promote inclusive leadership power, change your personal messaging from "my" to "our."
- Here is one thing I can honestly say, we EARN leadership every single day.

- Here is today's message for those who choose to lead, You don't have to slow down, but pay attention to your speed.
- Here is how you get out of a monotonous fray, Consider moving a creative idea forward today.
- If your success only happens when you dream, then you need to find a new team.
- Motivation comes within meaning it is YOU that can, so get off the couch and implement YOUR plan.
- Moving too fast sometimes will lead to a fall, but I would rather do that then doing nothing at all.
- Dig in the dirt and plant today's leadership seed, You cant be scared if you are going to LEAD!
- Agriculture is king and truly is the answer that's right, When will the entire world's population see this light?
- You have to have a good balance of experience and youth, you need both of their perspectives to understand the truth.
- Creating the future is definitely up to YOU; So, on this beautiful day, what WILL YOU DO?
- Make your 'to do' list during your Sunday night feast, Attack Monday like it is a BEAST!
- Finding collaborative solutions is the key for everyone to get along, That's the foundation of problem solving keeping the team strong.
- The rope is secured so hold on nice and tight, It is sometimes lonely to standup for what's right.
- A firm handshake is a perfect way to close a deal, Hand-to-hand while eye-to-eye adds something real.
- Hit a problem head-on with a bright smile, That's how to handle it with professional style.
- Production agriculture is the only real and sustainable key, To unlock the world's hunger problems and set 7 billion people free.

- Well, its round and round and round you will go, And that's what will happen without a plan to grow.
- Change is inevitable, so you might as well get with it, But only you decide how it will best fit.
- Respect is earned if you want to stand out from the rest, Which is why admitting mistakes will make you the best.
- 8 am on Monday morning is the most important hour, it will define your potential week's impact and power.
- What is Monday morning really all about? It will define how to make the week count.
- Customer service and transformational leadership is all about giving, which is why I pinch myself because of the work I get to do for living.
- Like it or not, you will always be defined who you are by your brand, which I why I choose positivity to stand out across the land.
- No more excuses for goodness sakes, apply yourself and do whatever it takes!
- Subject matter smarts and people with character make a great team, And not with just the Boston Red Sox if you know what I mean
- While others do good just to perform, GREATNESS is in those that are able to transform!
- Clearly articulating you organization's vision is best, Say it over-and-over so people don't have to guess.
- Change happens either to you or through you. So, what will that statement prepare you to do?
- Man, how I do love Friday workdays!, Work hard so this weekend, we can play!

WORDS THAT HAVE NEVER
BEEN SO POWERFUL AND TRUE,
NEVER EVER FORGET...THE
ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH.



Chris and his wife, Randi

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