

THE LEADERSHIP LENS Newsletter

May 2005, © Mark Sincevich, Staash Press

A monthly resource providing insight, opinion & practical information on creativity, balance, leadership & personal development

Living More Each Day

I could hear my Father's voice saying, "What are the lessons of driving in a run-down neighborhood?" First make sure all of your doors are locked. The next lesson is to be keenly aware of your surroundings. You need to notice every detail, including the way you came, in case a fast getaway is necessary. Avoid looking at anyone for very long or not at all, and make sure not to leave any valuables in your car. Of course the last lesson is useless if you can't find a guarded parking lot. I repeated these things over and over in my head as I drove north on Interstate 295 looking for my exit.

I was worried about my safety as I drove past abandoned lots with an eclectic assortment of yard art, houses that stopped wishing to be painted, and working age people hanging out on street corners holding what I hoped were lunches in brown paper bags. I had been hired to photograph a Children's Memorial Flag Day Ceremony. I entered the school and passed through an early model metal detector manned by a security guard. When the honor guard brought in the stars and stripes to the auditorium, I started snapping away. I listened to teachers and dignitaries and to students that read poetry and rose to literary heights. One turned into an instant rap star! She motivated the entire audience with her message of 'living more each day.' The goose bumps on my arms reminded me of why I was there in the first place, to motivate others through my photography. I was now concentrating on how I was helping instead of how I could be hurt.

Why even in the safest of neighborhoods do some people barely say hello or smile as we walk past? In Michael Bugeja's book, "Interpersonal Divide" *the search for community in a technological age*, he writes, "We invite the world (through the TV and computer) into our homes and lives, but also neglect those who dwell in our homes and those who share our hometowns." Part of the problem is our rising dependency on personal technical appliances, but I believe it has more to do with not really feeling connected to ourselves. Technology is a frugal attempt to cover up the lack of rich interpersonal communication that has defined countless generations before us. How many people do you know that don't feel connected to the physical world around them? We are searching for the connection 'out there' when we need to establish a passionate connection to ourselves first.

One of the best ways to start learning about what you are passionate about is by keeping a file. When you read an article that is really inspiring, tear it out of the magazine and put it into a file. I started doing this many years ago with a file called "Awesome People." It has now morphed into many sub-files, but the concept remains the same. One person's story that I put into my file was about Matel Dawson, Jr. He loved working at Ford Motor Company and this simple factory worker was able to save over \$800,000. He gave this money to others in need in the form of college scholarships. He may not have been wealthy, but he led a rich life. This brings to mind a comment from National Geographic photographer and professional speaker Dewitt Jones who said, "Do what you love and the riches will follow." If you want to have a rich life, start by studying the positive lessons of others. The more examples you have in your file, the more motivated you will be to live your life in a similar way.

According to counselor Ernest Fitzgerald, every six months approximately 11 million people seek professional help for their unhappiness. I am sure that the number will grow the more dependent we become on technology and the less time we spend deepening our connections to others and to ourselves. Organizations that encourage their employees to follow their passions will find workers who are more engaged, aware and contributory. I would rather have my organization represented by somebody who cared deeply for the mission instead of somebody who just wanted a job.

I was more than doing my job; I was taking passionate photographs in the press pool during a Senate Subcommittee hearing on appropriations when a low level alarm sounded recently on Capitol Hill. Capitol police rushed in and helped herd everyone out of the door and onto the streets. I was told that this was not a drill. Immediately black SUV's with the blue flashing lights of the U.S. Secret Service zoomed through the crowd as they transported VIPs away from the Capitol. F-16's and helicopters patrolled overhead. I turned around and photographed thousands of people streaming down the hill towards Union Station, many passing me. I felt lightheaded as I imagined we were under a gas attack or that a dirty bomb had exploded. I fought back repeated tears wondering if I would ever see my family again. In 20 minutes, we learned it was a false alarm and I called my wife to tell her that I loved her. Doing what we love means being engaged in the world around us. We need to learn not to lock out the world, but to let it wash over us through our smiles, our voices and our hearts.

About Mark Sincevich

Mark Sincevich enhances people and organizations by tapping into their creative power. Through his photography expertise, he brings a unique angle to his professional speaking programs on photography, creativity, balance and personal development. In Mark's 17 years of business experience, he earned President's Club for sales excellence four times and has held executive management positions. He is an active member of the National Speakers Association, and he continues to sharpen his over 21 years in photography as an instructor at the Washington School of Photography and as a member of the Professional Photography Association (PPA). He was an official photographer at President George W. Bush's Second Inauguration and is the author of two books and numerous articles. He is frequently quoted in the media and his articles and photography have appeared in newspapers and magazines around the country. His customers include Fortune 1000 companies, government agencies, associations and individuals wanting to improve their photography. When he isn't speaking professionally or taking photographs, he can be found spending time with his family or writing in coffee shops with character. For more information on Mark's professional speaking programs, photography, books and CDs contact Staash Press at (301) 654-3010 or www.staashpress.com.

Learn how to live a richer life by following your passion when you hear Mark Sincevich present his "Press for Passion" program.

We will never sell or give away your personal information, and you can ask to have yourself taken off our distribution list at anytime by replying to one of our messages with "Take Off" in the subject line. If you would like to reproduce this article, please contact newsletter@staashpress.com.