

## :: Dana's Weekly Insight :: 09.17.07 – No Matter How Far



Great minds have proven, indeed, that the shortest path between two points is a straight line.

Unless,

you are interested in more than simply getting from point "A" to point "B".

The actual distance, to be sure, between where you are and where you want to be, can only be measured by the width and the breadth and the depth of the countless and unexpected circumstances, setbacks and disappointments you've encountered along the way.

And yet,

the sum total of all of the obstacles that exist between you and where you want to be will seem immeasurable at times.

The shortest path is the easy path, like the path of least resistance. And, the path of least resistance has never led anyone to greatness, because the road to greatness will require that you endure and it will demand that you -

BELIEVE.

### **He writes:**

"I would talk to anyone who would listen. Mostly though I just traveled, often driving alone, first from ward to ward...then from county to county and from town to town...up and down the state, across miles and miles of corn fields and bean fields and train tracks and silos...I had to rely on friends or acquaintances to open up their houses to whomever might come...Sometimes after several hours of driving, I would find just two or three people waiting for me around a kitchen table."

He describes how no one would return his calls, how he held press conferences and nobody came, and how, when he asked to be in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade, he was assigned the last slot, right in front of the sanitation workers hired to clean up after the parade. He marched and waved to what few people remained on the parade route "while workers swept garbage and peeled green shamrock stickers from

off of the lamp posts".

Poised to become the first, and in surrender to the call, which of the details of those humble beginnings remain? Which ones fade away?

**She confides:**

"When I clapped eyes on the place, I burst into tears. I couldn't stop crying. For a moment, I was back where I had been all those years ago. And I'm standing there and I'm looking at this place and...it was almost like, I would see the ghost of myself standing in the window and I would be able to communicate to that person,

'It's all going to be okay. You know, you're working so hard, and it will be okay. And it will be more than okay, it will be fabulous'."

She reflects on her first visit back to the apartment where she had been living and struggling trying to write that first book.

Confronting the past from the present, knowing how it all turns out in the end, how difficult is it to remember the days when hope was a luxury but certainly not an option?

**He remembers:**

"I found solitary confinement the most forbidding aspect of prison life. There is no end and no beginning; there is only one's own mind, which can begin to play tricks. Was that a dream or did it really happen? One begins to question everything. Did I make the right decision? Was my sacrifice worth it? In solitary, there is no distraction from these haunting questions."

Put on trial for sabotage, treason, and violent conspiracy, found guilty and sentenced to life forever in prison and under the harshest conditions, he refers to that time as "the dark years".

Free at last to finally follow the dictates of a steadfast heart, can the truth of the memory of a time and a place when it was impossible to conjure up freedom again, withstand?

Imagine.

One of the hardest things that anyone will ever do is to talk themselves into believing the possibility of having something that looks completely impossible to obtain. Running for public office when no one really knows or cares about who you are, because you can see what the world might be like - if only; writing a book when you don't have two nickels to rub together, but you do have kids to feed, because you've been captivated by the limitlessness of your own imagination; fighting the good fight relentlessly, in solitude and from behind bars, unable to distinguish the beginning from the end, because you believe it is every man's right to be free -

## TAKES EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT!

And to keep on enduring and believing will require of you, even more than that.

Did Barack Obama drive all of those miles to speak to just three people around a kitchen table because he was already basking in the glow of notoriety and support? And did he seek to hold public office because he felt that he had nothing extraordinary to say?

When J.K. Rowlings sat at her desk night after night, re-arranging word after word, was it because she already had somebody's guarantee in writing or a foot in the door somewhere? Did she choose to be a writer because there was nothing else that she could do?

Confined and alone in an 8-by-8 foot space for 26 years at the prime of his life, wouldn't Nelson Mandela have been justified in rationalizing that he had already done more than his fair share?

And you?

Getting from point "A" to point "B" is easy when all you are doing is running out to pick up a loaf of bread. Getting from where you are to where you want to be when you are crystal clear that you are destined - - is going to seem impossible at times. You will be tempted to choose the path of least resistance because a journey on the road less traveled is guaranteed to break your heart. It will challenge everything that you know to be true. You will work hard, drive alone and question, everyday, whether or not you made the right decision in the first place.

Many a man will dream a dream because dreaming a dream - that's the easy part. Few men, however, will actually go after their dream with everything they've got; few men will choose greatness,

because --

the shortest path between two points is a straight line.

Dana

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