

The Fire Within

I recently acquired a new fireplace insert that will heat my home, reducing the use of our gas heat. I forgot how much of a pyromaniac I am. I love to build a fire from scratch and watch the flames grow—soothing and warm on a cold winter night. Building a fire is not always easy. If you don't construct it properly from the beginning, the flame will soon die out and you will have to start all over again with new material. You must lay a simple but efficient method of kindling to initiate the fire, dry pine then hardwoods to build a coal base, generating a long warm burn for consistent heat. The method is not as easy as it seems, but once you have mastered the art of fire building your fires should be warm and bright. Unfortunately, this is not always so. Many times, if not given the proper foundation, or not built upon with TLC, the fire will diminish and you will have to start over.

This too is true in life. Our relationships, both personal and professional, need constant fueling to make the fire glow. We start businesses from scratch and nurture them and watch them grow only to find outside influences taking away from their flame, forcing us to rebuild and reignite the passion and energy to make them grow again. As most of us have experienced trials and tribulations in life and we have witnessed the loss of our zeal to live and fight another day, it is critical to constantly watch our fire, fuel when needed, and build a new fire when ours is snuffed out. Life, like a fire, is a delicate balance between the way we build and maintain, but always with a passion to keep the fire growing within.

"The most powerful weapon on earth is the human soul on fire."

Marshal Ferdinand Foch

Many of us are facing difficult times in our business and personal lives. When our businesses fail, our home lives suffer. At times the pressure we feel makes it difficult to get up in the morning; to face another day. Our thoughts inevitably lead us to failure or success, depending on where our focus lies. We must wholeheartedly believe in our own plans, use our God given abilities to carry them out, and have the proper awareness so God can work through

us. When we are in tune and aligned with our soul, we will be able to think correctly about everything that we do. Along with positive thinking, we must be energetic and persistent in taking actions that will lead to our success.

To be successful, we need to refocus our attention from failure to success, from worry to serenity, from a wandering mind to concentration, from restlessness to peace. We can never give up, continuing to take new actions after we fail. We must learn from our mistakes and resolve that any actions we take will be carefully planned. Remember that extraordinary talent is not as necessary as unshakable purpose and steadfast effort. Most people fail to attain their material, mental, and spiritual desires because of a lack of definite purpose and sustained effort.

I believe the single most noteworthy decision I can make on a day-to-day basis is my choice of mind-set. It is more important than my past, my education, my bankroll, my successes or failures, my pain, my circumstances, or my position. Attitude keeps me going or cripples my development. It alone fuels my fire or attacks my optimism. When my attitudes are right, there is no obstacle too high, no valley too low, no dream too grand, and no challenge too extreme for me. In facing these tough times, you are not alone. You can choose to address these challenges with choices that will determine who you will become. Your attitude and your desire to succeed will help you through if you put your mind to the grind, trust in God, and surround yourself with caring people who can see you

through the tough times. Persevere and pray for guidance and wisdom and then act on this advice and make it happen. Never let the fire go out; light the fire within.

"In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit."

Albert Schweitzer

