

CHAPTER 1

WHY ARE YOU WRITING A BOOK?

A blog is defined as a website written by an individual or group of users to produce an ongoing narrative. It comes from the words web and log.

A book is defined as a written piece of work consisting of pages glued or sewn together and bound by a cover.

Throughout my life, people have told me I should write a book to share my adventures and knowledge. I thought that it was weird, considering I have no formal journalistic training. I wasn't an avid reader of books. I wasn't a fan of writing long papers in school. How was I going to write a book?

My mom made me read a lot as a child. She signed me up for the *Weekly Reader Book Club*. Every week, a new book came in the mail. I read the ones that I liked, while many went unread. As I got older, my reading encompassed comic books, the world atlas, history books, magazines, journals, advertisements, websites, and lots of office paperwork.

I loved to talk, but writing a book seemed impossible to me. Then, I graduated college and entered the professional workplace. I needed to share my thoughts with others when I couldn't share them verbally. I started writing newsletters. It was an easy and fun way to share important information. I could put my thoughts together in a clear and concise way. I could be direct and to the point without writing a book.

In the summer of 2005, my family moved to Florida. I wanted them to

keep up to date with my life and thoughts. That's when I was introduced to the world of blogging. A friend showed me how to set up my own site. Soon, I was posting stories and pictures of my life's ups and downs. My family and friends could see what I was up to. I named my blog "Fresh from the Kitchen." Every entry was a fresh idea that I could share with the people close to me. Before I knew it, people I didn't know were reading my blog.

People enjoyed my thoughts and ideas on a variety of subjects. They were sharing them with their family and friends. I wrote a blog while I was in Australia and discovered that people were reading my blog daily with their morning coffee. There were people who sent me concerned e-mails when I didn't blog for an extended period of time. There were even more people who commented that I should write a book.

I told myself that I didn't have time to write a book. I made excuses about being too busy. I was too busy living life and sharing the stories on my blog. One night while uploading a new blog entry, I began reading my past entries. There were over 600 entries to sort through. I discovered that I had enough material to write several books.

That is the night my idea light bulb lit up: *write your book like you write your blogs! Write a narrative of stories bound by a cover.* People write books for many reasons. My reason is simple: I would like to share stories that will educate, inspire and entertain people about life and leadership.

To read my blog, please go to www.kitchenfrank.com.

CHAPTER 2

CELEBRATE LIFE



“Life is about experiences and relationships!” – Bernie Morgan

In 2006, I was sitting in the home of Bernie Morgan in Adelaide, Australia. I was having an insightful conversation with Bernie, his wife Colleen, and my friend Dave. We discussed politics, religion, family, friends, food, and wine. While sipping a glass of wine, Bernie made the quote that has changed my life. *Life is about experiences and relationships.*

I was in Australia for the adventure of a lifetime. Six weeks exploring the country as representative for Rotary International and the United States. Bernie and his wife Colleen were hosting my friend Dave and I. As our host family, they taught us about their country and culture. Bernie and Colleen aren't big fans of television. They are big fans of developing strong relationships and creating lasting memories. The week that I spent with them was amazing.

Time spent with Bernie and Colleen was all about people. It was about learning and communication. It was about experiences. One of my experiences took place on Easter Sunday. Bernie took our group to a hanger at a small airfield. The hanger belonged to a friend who collected vintage aircraft. One of his prized planes was a World War I United States Army biplane. Our group of three each had the opportunity to fly in the plane. I was the last person to fly in the open cockpit plane. The weather was perfect, the views were amazing, and the experience is permanently etched in my mind and the memory card of my digital camera.

CHAPTER 2 - CELEBRATE LIFE

Reliving that story made me realize that I have an amazing life. I've accomplished more than I could have imagined. I have been told my stories and experiences are inspiring. Truth be told, they inspire me too. They give me the urge to pursue new experiences and to continue to develop positive relationships. The stories of these experiences and relationships will be shared with you in this book.

Amazing experiences are the offspring of strong and positive relationships. You too have lived an amazing life. You have accomplished the unthinkable. Your experiences can inspire the people around you. They will inspire you to do more in the future. Life is a celebration. Make time to relive your accomplishments. Dedicate time to develop and nurture relationships. Make the most out of every experience. And, remember to celebrate! Thank you, Bernie and Colleen, for a very important life lesson and your continued friendship.

CHAPTER 3

INSPIRATION



“Really great people make you feel that you, too can become great.”

– Mark Twain

I worked at Lakeland Community College in Kirtland, Ohio for nine years. I left the school in July of 2007 to pursue a career as a professional speaker, and to move closer to my future wife in Arizona. Many of my co-workers told me that they would miss me.

I informed the college of my decision to leave that May. Every week, the President of the college sent out a letter to the employees. The letters covered a variety of subjects. That May, he asked college employees to contribute to the weekly letter. When word of my departure spread, he asked me to write something. Here’s what I wrote. This is one of the *light bulb* moments that made me write this book.

(May 2007)

I received a phone call last week from the President’s Office “asking” me if I would write the next edition of “Morris’ Musings.” My options were “yes” or “yes.” I decided on option number two. Once I committed myself to be this week’s “Special Guest Writer,” I needed something to write about. Should I write something serious? Should I be funny? Should I keep it short? Hmmmm? Then it hit me: I’m going to do what I do best, I’m going to be me! First step, name my musing. “Fresh from the Kitchen.” Next step, start typing.

“Fresh from the Kitchen” Edition #1

Friday, July 20, 2007 will be my last day of employment at Lakeland Community College. My experiences at Lakeland have been amazing. I often tell people that I might have to write a book or a sitcom about some of the experiences. We often refer to the people who work here as “The Lakeland Family.” I would like to thank that family for taking me in. I especially want to thank Rich Novotny for taking the chance to hire and mentor an inexperienced kid nine years ago.

That leads me to my musing. I would like to thank Morris for inviting me to write to all of you. I also want to thank Morris in advance for the Clocktower Award presented to me for all my hard work on this musing (hint, hint). I’ve been reading Morris’ Musings since he started writing them. At the end of every musing, he thanks everyone for Impacting Lives through Learning. I often think to myself, what does that mean? “Impacting Lives through Learning” is Lakeland’s slogan. It’s Lakeland core purpose. Do we think about this core purpose every time we come to Lakeland?

In December of 1991, I moved to Mentor, Ohio from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I had the grades, several college acceptance letters, but not enough money to go to the “REAL” colleges. My mom suggested I enroll at Lakeland Community College. I was a little hesitant at first. I didn’t want to go to a “community college”! I will admit, I was very young and very misinformed about community colleges. In 1992, I started taking classes at Lakeland. I soon discovered how much of an impact Lakeland would have on my life.

Impact is defined as a significant or strong influence. It is also defined as the effect something has on something else. This influence or effect can be positive or negative. In my case, the impact was very positive. As a student, Lakeland offered affordable classes taught by top-notch instructors. Lakeland also offered a variety of co-curricular opportunities to help me grow personally outside the classroom. That combination turned a shy kid into an outgoing young adult with a two-year Associates Degree in 1995.

I eventually transferred to the University of Akron, then went on to Myers University. Then, I got my first job in the real world. At school or at work, I was often asked, "where did you learn that?" I always replied, "Lakeland Community College." I started to recognize how much of an impact Lakeland had on my life. It was more personal than the real schools. I could talk to someone face to face when I needed help or assistance. I learned skills for the classroom, and skills for life, from the people at Lakeland.

I eventually came back to Lakeland in 1998 to work in the Student Activities Office. What a great opportunity and experience! I wanted to share the positive experiences that I had as a Lakeland student with current students. Many students and their parents tell me about the positive impact Lakeland and I had on their lives. Many of those students don't realize the impact they have on my life and our lives. They help us as we continue to learn and grow.

Fifteen years after I first stepped foot on the Lakeland campus, I am preparing to leave again. I'm preparing to take on the new challenge of living in a new state, developing new relationships and pursuing new career opportunities. I start to think what got me to this point and once again I know its Lakeland. There is a statement: "you never know what you have until it's gone." Soon Lakeland will be a memory, but I'll always remember my time here.

Being in a learning environment is motivating. Everyone has a dream. Everyone wants to take on the world in some way. Lakeland is a stepping-stone for students to achieve their dreams. The faculty and staff at Lakeland have a strong influence on students achieving their dreams. We are the "something" affecting "something" else.

We are all here because of the students. Without the students, we wouldn't have our jobs. Every time a student or prospective student comes in contact with a member of the Lakeland Family, we are impacting their lives. Learning doesn't only happen in the classroom, it happens everywhere on campus. We need to think about how we can impact the lives of the students and our Lakeland Family members in a positive way

CHAPTER 3 - INSPIRATION

Do you know who's who on campus? Do you know the responsibilities of the different departments? If you see trash around campus, do you pick it up? Do you answer your phone or let it go into voicemail? Do you complain about everything or make suggestions for improvement? Do you respond quickly to your e-mails? Do you help mentor new college employees? Do you attend campus events or programs? Do you take advantage of the classes offered? Do you share your Lakeland stories with students and co-workers? The list goes on and on. All are examples of experiences that impact people (students and employees) on campus. We have the choice to make it a positive or negative experience. That choice impacts the lives of many people: prospective students, current students, and employees.

Lakeland has used the slogans "Students First," "Opportunity Starts Here," and currently "Impacting Lives through Learning." These words focus on the number one thing at Lakeland: the students. Lakeland and its employees have had a positive impact on thousands of students/people. I am one of them. In turn, I have positively impacted the lives of others. It's easy to focus on the negative, but we should take the time to focus on the positive impact we can make. The next time you read Morris's Musing and you see the term "Impacting Lives through Learning," think about that new student stepping on campus for the first time or that student crossing stage at graduation. Think about what you do here at Lakeland. Ask yourself: "Does my attitude or work make a negative impact on that life or a positive impact?" I hope all of you go for option number two!

Thank you, Lakeland,

Frank Kitchen

A few days later, I received this e-mail:

Frank,

It looks like you may be on to something here. You could start by simply doing a personal journal. Then, after a few years, you could publish your writings and retire a wealthy and young man. Then, you could come back here and be President. Just something to think about. Thanks again, Frank. I would say your Kitchen Musing was very well-received.

Morris