

## Robert Vanourek: "Leadership Wisdom: Lessons from Poetry, Prose and Curious Verse"

### 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Group

- "The Man in the Arena." - Theodore Roosevelt
- "Slow Me Down, Lord" - Wilferd Peterson
- Participant dialogue: If your pace has been too frenetic, what have you done, or what might you do, to slow down? (4 minutes); Table Report: (4-minutes)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Group

- "What Constitutes Success" - Bessie Stanley
- Participant dialogue: How have you been defining success, and what might you learn from this poem? (4 minutes); Table Report: (4-minutes)

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading Group

- "The Paradoxical Commandments" - Dr. Kent Keith
- Participant dialogue: What do you take away from Dr. Keith's Paradoxical Commandments? (4 minutes); Table Report: (4-minutes)

### Closing comments

"This is the True Joy in Life" - George Bernard Shaw

## **“The Man in the Arena”**

**Theodore Roosevelt**

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

## **“Slow Me Down Lord”**

**Wilferd Peterson**

Slow me down, Lord!  
Ease the pounding of my heart  
By the quieting of my mind.  
Steady my harried pace  
With a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give me, amidst the confusions of my day,  
The calmness of the everlasting hills.  
Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles  
With the music of the singing streams  
Which live in my memory.

Help me to know  
The magic restoring power of sleep,  
Teach me the art of taking minute vacations

...

Of slowing down to look at a flower;  
To chat with a friend,  
To pat a dog;  
To read a few lines from a good book.

Remind me each day  
Of the fable of the hare and the tortoise,  
That I may know that the race is not always to the swift;  
That there is more to life  
Than increasing its speed.

Let me look upward

Into the branches of the towering oak  
And know that it grew great and strong  
Because it grew slowly and well.

Slow me down, Lord,  
And inspire me to send my roots deep  
Into the soil of life's enduring values  
That I may grow toward the stars  
Of my greater destiny.

### **"What Constitutes Success"**

**Bessie Stanley**

He has achieved success who has lived well,  
Laughed often and loved much  
Who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, gained the respect of intelligent men,  
And the love of little children  
Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task  
Who has left the world better than he found it  
Whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul  
Who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it  
Who has always looked for the best in others and given them the best he had  
Whose life was an inspiration  
Whose memory a benediction.

### **"The Paradoxical Commandments"**

**Dr. Kent M. Keith**

People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered.  
Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.  
Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.  
Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.  
Do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.  
Be honest and frank anyway.

The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds.

Think big anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.

Fight for a few underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

People really need help but may attack you if you do help them.

Help people anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

Give the world the best you have anyway.

### **“This Is the True Joy in Life”**

**George Bernard Shaw**

This is the true joy in life,

The being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one;

The being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap;

The being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances,

Complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community,

And as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die,

For the harder I work, the more I live.

I rejoice in life for its own sake.

Life is no brief candle to me.

It is sort of a splendid torch, which I've got a hold of for the moment,

And I want to make it burn as brightly as possible

Before handing it on to future generations.