

It's All About FOCUS!

The 2008 Summer Olympics have officially begun! Already there are stories of wonder, amazement, disappointment, challenge, success, smiles, and tears. Already we have cheered -- sometimes silently, sometimes loudly. Regardless of which country we live in, we are proud to see our country's representatives on this global stage, to hear our national anthem played, to see our flag displayed. Already we have been inspired, thrilled, and astounded.

I don't know about you, but I marvel at the abilities, the dedication, the enthusiasm, and the FOCUS of the athletes from around the world. The smiles that come with success and the knowledge they did their very best are stories in and of themselves. The ability to be gracious, through disappointment caused by injury or a momentary 'slip', is made even more awesome because of the enormous amount of time they have spent just making the team. The vignettes shown about some of these athletes - who they are and their journey to this time - are inspiring.

And yet, as inspiring as these games and the athletes are, I often encounter other stories of courage and challenge, inspiration and wonder, smiles and tears. From the variety of seniors who live in the same retirement village as my mom, to the young grandchildren of friends and colleagues, to everyday encounters with clients and colleagues, they each teach us things by sharing their stories.

Recently I was visiting my mom in California, and as times passes the visits are becoming more difficult. At age 98, mom is definitely winding down. Yes, she still teaches her Bible study classes each week, and we figure she's pretty much on 'auto pilot' during those sessions (50+ years as the preacher's wife have insured that ability). Other than that, she goes nowhere and doesn't do much of anything - her physical limitations are evident and her mental alertness is sporadic at best; short term memory is gone and her hearing is somewhat 'selective'. Yet, her smile is still the same, and the twinkle in her eye is never very far away. She can no longer walk and so she goes from her rocking chair, to her electric wheelchair, to her bed. The physical endurance and capability to make those transfers are nothing short of amazing (certainly equal to any Olympian in terms of dedication and FOCUS). As she prepares for the transfer she recites her own personal mantra, over and over - "I've done it before, I can do it again." Then she counts, "One, two, three," as she makes the first of many attempts to complete the transfer from one chair to another. It often takes several attempts over multiple minutes and yet, she won't accept any help. As I watched this process and she rested in-between attempts, her eyes began to twinkle and she said, "I'm sure glad there's more numbers after one, two, three."

Perseverance, will power, determination, attitude, and FOCUS tell the tale - from Olympians living their dreams to my mom in her twilight years . . . 'one world, one dream', many stories.

What do the stories from your journey say to those whose lives you touch? What do others see and observe? What kind of behavior does your attitude and your FOCUS inspire in your team, your family, your friends.

We learn from the stories we find everywhere, from the people we observe, the opportunities and challenges that come our way. We pass those lessons of hope, inspiration, challenge, persistence, attitude, and FOCUS along through our own stories and behaviors. What stories are you sharing? What lessons are you teaching? What's your FOCUS? How is it affecting your bottom line, your relationships, your attitude?

Aloha,