Wanna Get Away?

Happiness is a goal we all strive to attain to have a more productive and meaningful life. One way to reach that goal is to develop a hobby, a gratifying diversion that can fill us with unconstrained enjoyment!

I am not talking about spending an extra hour on the computer developing your Candy Crush skills. I am talking about doing something that includes puttering, playing, digging, petting, building, cooking, collecting or a fishing pole. I am talking about finding something that fires the old rockets (that may include toy rocket launching) or experimenting with a half-baked idea (including duplicating Grandma's original oatmeal cookie recipe).

Having a hobby that interests us not only helps our mental outlook but assists in keeping away negative influences and sour people. Psychologists, social workers and mental health experts list numerous explanations as to why we should develop hobbies. I trust the following seven tips will help persuade you to create a deviation from the norm and help you get away.

Don’t Be the Chicken Crossing the Road
Have you been in the same old rut for far too long? Are you the chicken that crosses the road just to get to the other side, without even considering why you are going to the other side? No matter what you do for a living, no matter how predictable your family life, friends, football team or shopping routine have become, there’s nothing like taking up a new hobby to inject a little excitement and amusement into that routine. You will find that no matter how much you’re dragging at the end of the day, looking forward to even spending half an hour pursuing a new hobby can freshen your life and make it less taxing. Don’t cross the road to simply get to the other side. Ask yourself why you are crossing it, and perhaps even consider taking another road.

Find a Distraction
When the predictable becomes the rule, whom are you going to call? Stress Busters! Hobbies are natural stress busters. Whether your hobby is assembling ships in bottles, learning to play the guitar, playing in an over 60 softball league or putting together a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle, no matter what stresses may be weighing you down, they will be lifted, or at least lessened, with a hobby. Lower stress usually means lower blood pressure, more smiling and a cheerier attitude.

Swim With the Sharks
There is almost nothing sadder than someone who sits around all day proclaiming that there is nothing left for them to accomplish. Just because you once set company sales records and ran three marathons doesn’t mean you can’t learn Japanese woodblock printing. Manufacturing new undertakings, no matter how great or humble, keeps our minds sharper. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking “I’m too old to do this or that!” There are 80-year-old
college freshmen, people learning new languages at all ages and thousands of inventors who developed products long after they "retired." Who knows, you may invent the next Scrub Daddy. (The most successful product in Shark Tank history, with 10 million units for total sales of more than $50 million since the pitch.)

**Attract Real Friends**

Hobbies can open up a whole new world of meaningful friendships with people who share a common interest. It's not what we do that attracts friends; it's how we think. Hobbies create a common mindset that many times allows us to become a magnet for new friends. Think of almost any hobby and you can probably find societies, websites, catalogs, retail outlets, monthly meetings and friendly competitions. Whether you collect stamps, grow tomatoes or are a little more imaginative and like soap carving or mooing (you can't make that up), just reach out and, within a short time, you will have a whole new set of acquaintances. New friends add color to our lives.

**Learn Something New**

A hobby can often be a great way to open up new conversations at social gatherings, breaks in business meetings, job interviews, church socials, long trips while sitting next to another traveler, or almost any time when there is an occasion to communicate in a spontaneous setting. When I meet a stranger, and he or she conveys they work at a lackluster profession, I always ask them what they do for fun when they aren't jaded at work. From restoring old lawn mowers to playing the Glockenspiel in the local marching band, I have been introduced to some unusual hobbies and, more importantly, I have learned a lot of things I never knew.

**March in Your Own Parade**

Don't get stale, and don't be around people who want you to stay flat. You should spend a lifetime adding interests and new aspects to your personality. If a new hobby or interest excites you, pursue it! Please don't allow the judgments of other people hold you back. If you get too tangled up in worrying about whether people like what you wear, the music you listen to and the hobbies you pursue, soon you are not going to enjoy what you're wearing, the music you listen to or your hobbies. Switch it around. March in your own parade and the "right" people will naturally gravitate toward you, people with whom you will enjoy spending time and be naturally closer to as you have things in common from the get-go.

**Try Something New**

Sometimes you just need to get away from it all. The blinking cursor, the confines of your house, the same restaurants, the same television programs and even the same grocery list. Routine can be beautiful, but only for as long as you can stand it. It's time to try something new and break beyond the limits of what you already know. Old practices never open up new doors. Wanna get away? Discover a new hobby and consider that there are seven days in a week and someday isn't one of them.

*Enjoy The Ride!*

Steve
MARGARET-isms

The more you love your decisions the less you need others to love them.
June 8, 2016

Dear Steve,

Thank you for presenting an engaging and thought-provoking keynote and breakout session at our 2016 OR/WA MGMA meeting (May 15-17). Our goal for this meeting was to give our members something positive to take back and apply to their jobs. Not only did they get that, they also got valuable lessons to use in their personal lives as well.

As administrators and managers it is very easy to get wrapped up in the day-to-day problems that must be attended to and let the positives get buried beneath the burdens. Your keynote ‘Enjoy the Ride’ reminded us that we have a choice on what to focus on and the joy it ours for the taking, if we allow it in.

The members of our association were elated to have the opportunity to purchase your books. Many excitedly told our staff at registration that they purchased all five that were available for sale! The powerful message that you delivered provided them with tools and resources that they can easily apply in their lives.

Your presentations gave exceptional value to our members. We have received many enthusiastic, positive responses about both your keynote and breakout. The average attendee score for your lunch keynote was 4.6 out of 5 and it was 4.89 out of 5 for the “Hide the Goat” breakout session. This is high praise coming from our very candid attendees. And the quality and significance of your presentations were noted in the open-ended comment section of many surveys.

Thank you again for giving our members so much.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Jeff Baird, MBA, CMPE
OMGMA President
2016 Annual Meeting Co-Chair

Cyndi Jackson, Nominee
MGMA-WA President-Elect
2016 Annual Meeting Co-Chair

"Your presentations gave exceptional value to our members. We have received many enthusiastic, positive responses about both your keynote and breakout."

Looking Ahead...

Steve’s July 2016 Schedule

1    Mooresville, NC
12   Little Rock, AR
15   Chicago, IL
18   Fort Worth, TX