

Path of Most Resistance by Steve Patterson

For many years I was under the impression that strength was required to be a man, a husband and a father. I felt that strength in the body; strength of character and making strong stands was what being a man was all about. I spent the first 25 years of my life trying to figure out what it means to be a man. The second 25 years was spent trying to do whatever was required to be a good man. I learned how hard it is for any man in this culture to be loyal to one woman, dedicated to his children and maintain one's integrity. I came to the conclusion many years ago that no man could sustain these qualities without being of strong mind, body and spirit. It was out of this conclusion that I set out to become as strong as I could be in order to become the finest man I could be. This is why I call these articles the Path of Most Resistance. In the gym and in life, the greater the resistance overcome, the greater the strength gained. Fortunately, I have recently discovered that strength alone is not enough.

The greatest resistance of all is the resistance to seeing one's own errors or shortcomings. I had the luxury and gift of having my shortcoming

shown to me last week in, of all places, the hardware store. My wife and I went there to pick up some floor finish as I was redoing our hardwood floors. While I was picking up sandpaper my wife went over to find out where the floor finish was by asking the clerk. I got impatient and short with her in public. I spoke to her in a way that embarrassed her. The clerk, in his infinite wisdom, asked her if it was okay for me to talk to her like that. She sloughed it off and I justified it but knew I had done wrong. My first reaction was to make the clerk wrong for intruding. My second reaction was to make my wife wrong. My third and final reaction was to see that I was wrong.

This action on my part triggered a time of introspection and self-assessment. I came to the conclusion that becoming strong was not enough to be a good man, husband and father. What I lacked was flexibility. I saw that I had become so strong that I was unbendable. I had become more like a rock than a palm tree that can move with the wind without becoming uprooted. I saw how my children were adversely affected by my rock like position. I

saw that I was failing as a husband by being too inflexible. I saw that I was not the man I set out to be by having my positions be so unwavering. I basically saw that although I was strong I lacked the compassion and caring that is needed to become a whole and complete human being.

Out of this realization I noticed how inflexible my body has become out of my inflexibility as a man. I began to have a drive to undo the inflexibility in my body with the hopes that it will assist me in undoing the inflexibility of my mind and spirit. I now have a drive to be both strong and flexible. I started to research what I felt was the best possible solution for both. In the near future as I change, my program will change. It is my hope that the next 25 years will be spent perfecting the art of being strong and flexible as a man, a husband, a father and a teacher. Thank you to the hardware clerk, Sergio for assisting me in becoming a better man.

Steve Patterson is a professional strength trainer and spirit teacher who lives in Ajo, Arizona. He can be reached at 520-387-3742.

IPPW Member Information

If you haven't signed up for your *In the Presence of Positive Women* membership yet, *what are you waiting for?*

There is no better time to get involved with other positive women than the present. Your involvement can be as simple as just reading your monthly newsletter (filled with motivational and inspirational articles), you can be actively involved by helping to start a chapter in your home town—or anything in between. The involvement is strictly voluntary, your membership is for you.

Our goal is to foster an environment where women meet to share tools of empowerment and find courage to reach their potential. We invite you to become part of a new wave of organization—one that is being created by you, for you.

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Visit our website www.positivewomen.com for a membership application.

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Publisher: Debby Hoffman, Positive Results Seminars 603.783.4446 debby@debbyhoffman.com
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Grammarians: Linda Moore, Word Processing Services 603.673.1129 lindamoore3@charter.net

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few friends, and one of the days we were to be there was a Sunday, so I made plans to hear her preach at her church.

One week later, I was driving on a Florida Highway, my three friends in tow and we were headed to the United Christian Church of Christ in Coconut Beach, FL.

Between the four of us we had a Catholic, an Episcopalian, one Jewish/Unitarian mix, and me, an eclectic sort—churchless by choice but living my life devoted to God. Another thing, we are all white.

Tina is a beautiful black woman with a smile that will melt your heart. Positive energy oozes through her soul. She is one of these “osmosis” kinds of people, the kind of person you just want to hang around with.

As we drove up to the church, we were greeted by Mother Dingle who recognized us immediately (as white women, we stood out in the crowd) and lead us into the sanctuary. Everyone was so nice to us and made us all feel so welcome.

The church was small and we learned it had been bought years ago by the former minister of the church, now Bishop Dingle, who also happens to be Tina’s dad. Tina’s entire family is involved with the church as well.

It is a Pentecostal Black Church, something that I, a Yankee white girl had never experienced; and it was one of the best worship services I have ever been to.

There were probably twenty people in the entire church—but with the positive energy and love that exuded from that house of worship, you would have thought there were hundreds.

Every person greeted us and made us feel welcome and the menfolk presented each of us with a bouquet of flowers to thank us for coming. I

told them if I lived closer, they would see me as a regular. It was truly a wonderful experience it was and it helped me to see the world through other eyes.

Another adventure I will share with you happened just this week. I

“I always know that if I ever go through a door and it’s not right for me, I can turn around. But I would never know what was in store for me unless I took a chance.”

was asked to speak at the women’s prison halfway house. I have never spoken to convicts before and thought it would be a growth opportunity.

The prison offers programs to inmates every Thursday, and a few weeks before, I went in to observe one of their regular meetings.

This time around, it was my turn to lead, and although I am usually one of the most well prepared speakers on the planet—even as I walked through the entrance, I was still not certain what I was going to say. After all, I had never been arrested, I have never served time, I was never violent or was involved with drugs, and how could I connect with them?

To make matters worse, every inmate except one entered saying how much they didn’t want to be there, how these programs are a waste of time, etc. (Thanks for the vote of confidence ladies.)

I began by telling them a little about myself, about how I had grown up in Dysfunction Land and a few crummy things that had happened in my life, to see if anyone could relate. Then I asked them, “If you were to devise the perfect seminar, what topics would you have in it?”

They started to open up and talked about things they wanted to talk

about: Self-Esteem, Guilt, Goals, Moving On and pretty soon we had all created a great program.

When done, hugs were given, laughter was heard and smiles were on faces as they walked out to their next assignment.

It was a wonderful opportunity for me to see life through prisoners’ eyes. There were about ten women involved and with all ten, I could see their goodness emerge. I could see firsthand how poorly they had been treated in life as well as how poorly some of the jail staff treated them.

Almost everyone had a story of drug addiction and everyone longed to go home to “be with their family.” Tears were shed when kids were mentioned. All felt remorse for what they had done, and all were scared about how they will handle things when they get out.

What did I have in common with them? Just about everything. As my friend Suzanne said, “These women may be in a jail with four walls and they can’t leave, but many more women are in a prison within their spirit and although they can begin to walk away anytime they want, they can never seem to find the way out.” How true.

The last adventure I will share with you was actually one of the first ones I have experienced.

I had met Suzanne last July in Phoenix, AZ at a National Speakers Conference. She was not a conference participant, merely there because she sensed she needed to be there. She tapped me on the shoulder which started a friendship that would literally change my life.

She is a real life muse, does incredible work with people and even I am at a loss for words to describe her. I was so impressed by her, that I flew her here to New England and she did a small retreat

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with some of my clients and friends and helped many of them change their lives for the better.

Last February, she invited me to come to her home, in Ajo, Arizona, to do more personal work and meet her husband. Steve is not only a strength trainer; he is a spiritual teacher as well.

To describe in detail what happened to me on that trip, I would probably need to write a book. I'll just say this: they had me walking miles in the desert, swinging sledge hammers, jumping on trampolines and understanding more about myself and my spiritual path that I could have ever imagined.

My trip was cut short as I had a death in my family, but even with abbreviated time, I can see how much it has changed my life for the better. I am a stronger, more positive and centered individual for the time I spent with them and I know I will continue to evolve each day toward the person I am supposed to be. [Sidebar – This fabulous duo will be coming to New England this fall to present a program, hosted by me. I'll keep you posted as the details are all worked out.]

So what do these three incidents have in common?

All three were unexpected situations, all three were doors that opened and all three were opportunities that I said "Yes" to. And all three changed my life forever. I used to be one that planned my life down to the minute, everything must be in order, perfection and everything that came with perfection ruled my life.

I am proud to say I now live my life looking for opportunities, seeing new doors open and going through the passageways. I always know that if I ever go through a door and it's not right for me, I can turn around. But I would never know what was in store for me unless I took a chance.

How about you? Are you ready for some new and exciting adventures? Start looking for the doors of possibilities – new adventures await. Maybe it will happen by someone tapping you on the shoulder or making a phone call. Just remember to be open because opportunities abound.

Love, Debby

Good Stuff To Ponder Author Unknown

Dear Readers,

The following came to me via the internet passed along by one of our members. I've given it a little "Debby" tweaking—good stuff to ponder.

♥ Debby

As I am fast approaching the first half century of my life, these are a few of the things I have learned thus far:

- Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.
- We should be grateful God doesn't give us everything we ask for.
- Money does not buy class.
- It's those small daily unexpected happenings that make life so spectacular.
- Everyone wants to be appreciated, loved and listened to. Even those who continuously live their lives encased in a hard shell.
- The Lord didn't do it all in one day. What makes me think I can?
- To ignore the facts does not change the facts.

- That when you plan to get even with someone, you are only letting that person continue to hurt you. Remember, if positive action produces positive results, then negative action produces negative results. Revenge is never the answer.
 - Love, not time, heals all wounds.
 - One of the best ways for me to grow as a person is to surround myself with people who are on the path that I wish to be on (osmosis).
 - Greet everyone you meet with a smile. Both of you will reap the benefits. Smiling is also an inexpensive way to improve your looks.
 - Life can be tough, but I'm tougher.
 - Opportunities are never lost; someone will take the ones you miss.
 - When you harbor bitterness, happiness will dock elsewhere.
 - I can't always choose how I feel, but I can choose what I do about it.
 - If you wish to live on top of the mountain, remember, happiness and growth happen while you're climbing it.
 - The less time I have to work, the more things I get done.
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