



JERRY WERNER

Random thoughts about my hero

Who is this man?

I met Jerry in the summer of '86. At the time, he was the GM of Sunset Hills and I was his newly appointed Sales Manager. Jerry didn't "pick" me and I didn't select him per se, but I was anxious to begin working with this overtly happy man that reminded me of Mr. Cunningham from the

show "Happy Days". I moved from San Diego to Canton for an opportunity to climb the ladder with our mutual company. The partnership that sprang from that relationship changed my life in ways I would have never dreamed.

It is difficult to express what Jerry means to me. It might be somewhat akin to trying to describe a beautiful sunset to a blind person. He is simply larger than life and thus I refuse to speak of him in a past tense as he has, and will continue to, impact my life for the rest of my days.

What made him tick?

The lines between a personal and professional relationship always seemed to blur with Jerry. Over the years he was my boss, my peer and later he reported to me. In all three scenarios, our interaction was really the same. Titles meant nothing to Jerry, but doing the right thing meant everything.

To those at his services today, I would wager to say all of you have met a smarter, savvier or more eloquent man than Jerry. However, I would bet dollars to donuts that none of you have EVER met a more unique and sincere person. Am I correct?

So what is it about Jerry? Why does he have this gift of somehow bringing out the best in everyone? Why do people work so hard to please him knowing that he is anything but a task master? Far be it for me to know the answers, but I am eternally grateful for his tutelage. He is, and for ever will be, my mentor and hero.

Jerry taught me the meaning of family...how to share emotion without shame...how to professionally bring people together not as co-workers but teammates...how to adore your wife. The list goes on as will his teaching.

Unassuming as he is, he's probably blushing and giggling as these words are read aloud. I don't think I have ever encountered a person that could deflect praise as quickly as Jerry, instead always wanting to diminish his role in accomplishments made and wave the flag of others.

Well, I'm sorry, Jerry. I'm calling you out today, my friend, to take a bow. Your journey on earth was one for the ages that was filled with dignity, passion, hard work, loyalty and most of all LOVE. All these traits wrapped up in that ol' teddy bear body of yours with that kind of country yet southern congeniality made you the irresistible person you are.

Rest up my friend, you have certainly earned it...but only until this service is over. It is now time for you to touch the souls in heaven as you have on earth.

Bob March

