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Prime Objectives Newspaper Column

January 2009

Your Standing Ovation Awaits !

A standing ovation can be summed up in two words, "authentic appreciation." The spark that ignites a standing ovation stems from some type of inspired action.

My two most memorable standing ovations were far from outstanding performances, but inspired action was certainly present.

Over two decades ago, as a very young senior executive in the newspaper industry. I was invited to give a speech at a large Association Conference representing daily and weekly newspaper/media companies throughout PA, NJ, DE, MD, WV and DC. Long story short, everything was perfect on center stage until my mind went completely blank while driving home a point.

Seconds dragged on like hours as I searched the heavens for the right words. Out of the silence one audience member stood up and loudly proclaimed, "This is the first time I ever saw Rick Forgay speechless." Without hesitation, the room full of seasoned executives sprang to their feet clapping and cheering with appreciation in the revelation. They were all happy not to be in my shoes. Openly laughing at myself that won their appreciation. This standing ovation was not for greatness, but for the willingness to "try" as a major conference speaker for the first time. I went on to become the youngest president in the 97 year history of that Association and internationally recognized conference speaker.

Just few months ago I put forth the intention to play guitar in a band. I never performed with a band before, just play the guitar recreationally. It's a world of difference between the two. Out of the blue, an opportunity presented itself to play a one-gig event with an ad hoc jazz/blues band this past December. Ignoring thoughts of public humiliation, I threw my guitar into the ring without hesitation. The result? Four diversely skilled musicians, three practices, six songs, one long-standing ovation. The audience showed appreciation not for greatness, but for our courage to "try" something most wouldn't risk.

The willingness to "try" exists within each of us. Step into the moment, "Your standing ovation awaits!"

By Rick Forgay

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