

Yogi Beare!

Values of a Blue Angel



Praise for
Yogi Beare! Values of a Blue Angel

“Powerful ... Yogi Beare! breaks more than the sound barrier. It explores the ‘values barrier’ where good leaders make the right decisions. Ken Majer has crafted a must-read book for any Chief Executive.”

DANIEL BARNETT, Chief Operating Officer, Vistage International,
The World’s Largest CEO Membership Organization

“Whether you are mastering a complex maneuver in a cockpit of a fighter jet or in the corporate boardroom, this authentic and gripping tale is a powerful testament to achieving dreams through a commitment to personal values.”

CAPTAIN STEVE BRIGANTI, USN, (ret.), Corporate Vice President,
The Reiser Group, Inc. 500 Honoree, #145 Fastest Growing Private
Company in America, 2006

“This book will be an inspiration for our young men and women in uniform to show ‘the sky is the limit’ if they set their minds (and hearts) to go after what might appear to be an unreachable goal.”

REAR ADMIRAL HANK GIFFIN, USN, (ret.), Senior Vice President,
Strikeforce Systems Integration, SAIC AMSEC

“Truly an extraordinary book that describes how high eagles can fly when driven by purpose and personal values. This is Ken’s best book yet about the power of living a values-driven life.”

DR. TOM HILL, Co-Author, *Chicken Soup for the Entrepreneur’s Soul*,
President, Eagoal, LLC

“I tried to skim the Prologue to Yogi Bearer! with a promise to get to the rest of the book in a couple of days, but I couldn’t put it down! I stayed up half the night and read it cover to cover. This is an important book about a unique young man and how he leveraged a values-driven approach to achieve greatness.”

PAT HYNDMAN, Group Chairman, Vistage International, Founder and CEO, PHd Leasing

“Both an entertaining and thought-provoking read. For me, the triumph of Scott’s story is the understanding that when we fail to utilize our gifts fully, we disappoint not only those around us, but ourselves as well. Scott’s ability to break out of the repeating death spiral of under-achievement is what, in my mind, made him truly extraordinary.”

REAR ADMIRAL STEPHEN I. JOHNSON, USN, (ret.), Founder and President, SBS Consulting, Inc.

“An exciting story of what it takes to succeed in life. This real-life epic demonstrates that setting goals and working hard to achieve them does pay off. A valuable set of lessons for anyone who aspires to fulfillment and happiness.”

VICE ADMIRAL CONRAD C. LAUTENBACHER, JR., USN, (ret.), Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

“Yogi Bearer! was an exciting story for me to read for two reasons. First, I was CEO of McDonnell Douglas Corporation when we developed and started producing the F/A-18 Hornet. Reading Yogi’s accounts about how that airplane has protected our freedoms around the world is indeed gratifying. Second, this book is about character development and I have devoted myself to character education in schools K-12 since retiring in 1988. Nothing is more important for our young people and this book proves my point!”

SANFORD N. McDONNELL, Chairman Emeritus, McDonnell Douglas Corporation (now part of The Boeing Company), Developer of the F/A-18 Hornet

“Wow! What a powerful and uplifting story about a remarkable leader we can all identify with. I couldn’t put it down. This book has a terrific message for all of us about the importance of learning from our mistakes, following our heart, and never giving up. Share Yogi Beare’s story. It is a real gift.”

VICE ADMIRAL NORBERT R. RYAN, JR., USN, (ret.), President, Military Officers Association of America

“A story of tenacity and internal fortitude told with a wonderful Navy backdrop. Yogi’s success is the ‘stuff’ that makes us all proud of the great American youth who rise above their backgrounds to serve with distinction in demanding and dangerous assignments to protect this nation and freedom around the world ... Bravo Zulu!”

REAR ADMIRAL CHUCK SAFFELL, USN, (ret.), Chief Executive Officer, Nortel Government Solutions

“Powerful and motivating! Everyone will be moved by this remarkable story about how personal values build character and drive success. I can see this book as an inspirational movie for today’s leaders and for America’s cream of the crop for tomorrow.”

JIMMY STEWART, President, The Eagle Institute of Leadership

“This book sheds new light on the nature of core values in a raw and vivid way! In today’s constantly changing and competitive business environment, Yogi’s solid commitment to his own personal values, sheer tenacity, and resilient spirit are the same essential ingredients that a 21st-century executive must embrace for survival and ultimate success.”

STEVEN E. SULLIVAN, CEO, Sullivan International Group, Inc., Inc. 500 Honoree, #7 Fastest Growing Private Company in America, 2004

“Yogi—what a story! Every proud American should read this book. Simple to read, this book is no doubt an outstanding sample of the American culture and values inherited from our founding fathers. A masterpiece, Dr. Majer, a masterpiece!”

ED TREVIS, President/CEO, Corvalent, *Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal's* #26 Fastest-Growing Private Companies in the Bay Area, 2005

“A true story about a young man who fulfilled a life-long goal to become a Blue Angel by placing his values and priorities on the ladder to his dream. This inspirational book should be read by every American youth.”

CAPTAIN JERRY ZACHARIAS, USN, (ret.), Past President, The Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Association (The Golden Eagles), Recipient of The Navy Cross



Yogi Beare!

Values of a Blue Angel



Kenneth Majer, Ph.D.

LCDR Scott A. Beare, USN, (ret.)

MajerCommunications
a division of MajerStrategies, Inc.
San Francisco, California

YOGI BEARE!

Values of a Blue Angel

by Kenneth Majer, Ph.D. and Scott A. Beare



Published by:
MajerCommunications
a division of MajerStrategies, Inc.
2856 Scott Street, Suite 1
San Francisco, CA 94123
www.kenmajer.com

Copyright©2007 by Kenneth Majer and Scott A. Beare

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without written permission from the author, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

ISBN 13: 978-0-9743940-2-2

ISBN 10: 0-9743940-2-5

Edited by Lynette Majer,
LeBlanc Slate, San Francisco and La Jolla, California

Book design by Peri Poloni, layout by Monica Thomas
Knockout Books, Naperville, Illinois
www.knockoutbooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

Dedication

Scott Beare, the aviator, and Ken Majer, the writer, both lost their mothers within days of each other while this book was being written. There could be no more fitting tribute to this story about Scott and the Blue Angels than to know that Margie Beare and Alice Majer are now flying with God's Angels for eternity.



Contents

<i>Author's Note</i>	13
<i>Foreword</i>	15
<i>Prologue</i>	19
CHAPTER 1: Determination	23
CHAPTER 2: Motivation	35
CHAPTER 3: Self-Respect	43
CHAPTER 4: Vision	53
CHAPTER 5: Resilience	67
CHAPTER 6: Achievement	83
CHAPTER 7: Endurance	97
CHAPTER 8: Friendship	103
CHAPTER 9: Courage	109
CHAPTER 10: Freedom	123
CHAPTER 11: Fun	127
CHAPTER 12: Love	133
CHAPTER 13: Humility	141
CHAPTER 14: Honor	153
CHAPTER 15: Teamwork	163
CHAPTER 16: Family	171
CHAPTER 17: Commitment	179
<i>Epilogue</i>	185
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	191





The stars impel but do not compel,
our life is largely what we make it.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Author's Note

THIS IS A TRUE STORY ABOUT Lieutenant Commander Scott A. Beare, USN, (ret.). In some cases, names have been changed to maintain anonymity while pursuing authenticity. It's a story that could be written about any number of those in service to America who live honorable, courageous lives of commitment not only to their country, but to their comrades, their families, and themselves.

The story is about struggle, doubt, pain, and all those other conditions and emotions that beset every young person growing up. It's a tale about an American boy who dug into the depths of his character to rise above a disadvantaged background. He joined the Navy as an enlisted man and, through many trials and tribulations, he went back to college so he could qualify to become an officer and to follow his dream—to be a Navy pilot. More than just any pilot, Scott “Yogi” Beare become a decorated combat veteran and went on to fly in the rarified atmosphere of the Blue Angels.

Yogi considered himself to be a normal everyday kid. And he did what every other normal everyday boy can do when he puts his mind to it: he transformed himself into a truly extraordinary man. That is the message of this book: anyone can rise to heights well beyond what others may believe he or she is capable of achieving. Ordinary people can become extraordinary, and extraordinary people can become exceptional. It's a matter of discovering who you are and living a life you believe in. All of us can achieve far beyond our measure when we call upon our personal values.

That's what this book is about—values. Woven throughout the story, you will find personal challenges and decisions that Scott made; some good and some bad. As the story unfolds, so does Scott's character as he discovers and learns to be true to his deeply rooted personal values.

In Yogi Beare's story, we see clearly that his actions define him. At different times in his life, he changes. He changes by force of self-determination. He learns, he falls back, he makes foolish choices, and he gains insight. But fundamentally, in his career as a naval aviator, Yogi is driven to success by the values of honor, courage, and commitment.

The lesson in this book is simple: no matter how ordinary you think you are, you can surpass the ordinary when you live a values-driven life. In Scott Beare's case, he became truly exceptional.



—Ken Majer

Foreword

by Nick Bollettieri, President, IMG Academies



IT WAS THE HIGHEST HIGH that a human being could ever experience—40,000 feet at Mach 1.20 (over 800 miles an hour) with Lt. Scott “Yogi” Beare at the controls of his F/A-18 fighter jet. I was flying with a Blue Angel.

I had always wanted to become a jet fighter pilot with the Navy, but the closest I actually got to flying was jumping out of airplanes as an Army paratrooper. I never lost my desire to fly fighter jets so when the opportunity came along to fly with the Blue Angels as part of their VIP program, I knew it would be as close to actually being at the controls of a fighter jet as I would ever get.

After the physical and preflight instruction, I headed out to the tarmac to meet Lt. Scott “Yogi” Beare. We exchanged introductions and climbed into the two-seater F/A-18 Hornet. Yogi’s crew chief strapped me in tighter than a

drum. Yogi then took his place in the cockpit, started the engines, and we taxied out. I tuned in with my earphones: “Blue Angel 7 requesting permission for takeoff.”

Yogi treated me gently—not with the maneuvers but with his demeanor. He was always reassuring in tone and always kept me abreast of what stunt he was about to put me through next. Nevertheless, I lost count of how many times I screamed “Holy S---,” but I’m proud to say that I never needed the infamous plastic bag.

When we shook hands at the end of the flight, I had a premonition that we would eventually become close friends. I am pleased to report that that has come to pass.



It was years before I learned of Yogi’s heroism under fire flying sixty-eight sorties over Iraq during Operation *Desert Storm*. I knew nothing of his commendations from the Secretary of the Navy nor that he had pretty much been considered a screw-up by his father when he was growing up.

For years Yogi never shared with me that he had fought his way up from manual labor mechanical positions in engine rooms, to the pinnacle of the fighter pilot hierarchy, an F/A-18 fighter pilot, and then even higher into the pantheon of Naval aviator legends—the cockpit of a Blue Angel jet.

Over the years, Yogi would fly down in an F/A-18 to visit with us at the IMG Academies in Bradenton, Florida. On one occasion, just before leaving to return home he

told me, “Have everyone ready at the Academy when I take off from the Sarasota Airport.” Later that day, Yogi and his F/A-18 appeared out of nowhere above our tennis center pushing the lowest legal limit he was allowed to fly. The noise was deafening! All the buildings shook and people ran for cover.

Right then and there I knew Yogi and I were very much alike. I, too, have been known for pushing the limits from time to time.

But don't let me mislead you: Yogi and I both know—and you will know, too, as you absorb the wisdom of this book—that it's not just pushing limits, it's adherence to the core values of life that determine both the quality of our lives and the successes we achieve.

These core values that Yogi embodies have, frankly, gone out of vogue in much of America. In fact, to some people, values might sound downright corny. But, when Yogi and his able author, Dr. Ken Majer write about determination, motivation, endurance, friendship, honor, love, teamwork, family, commitment, and more, I can assure you they are not merely spouting homilies or engaging in abstractions. They are setting out for us a roadmap of how to live a meaningful and successful life.

At the Bollettieri Tennis Academy in Bradenton, it is the same discipline that Yogi brought to all aspects of his life that separates the truly great players from the merely competent. I've had the opportunity to work with many of the finest players in the world, including Andre Agassi, Boris Becker, Venus and Serena Williams, Pete Sampras,

Monica Seles, Martina Hingas, Mary Pierce, Maria Sharapova, and dozens and dozens more. Every one of them was disciplined—sometimes to a fault.

When I first read *Yogi Beare! Values of a Blue Angel*, I was truly impressed with the principles and values by which Scott Beare has lived his life. His endurance, his courage, his drive to keep going—and his getting into trouble, then fighting his way out of it—well, that’s how I’ve lived my life, too.

I would like to see everyone—I mean *everyone*—read this book. Anyone who reads it, from high school students to college kids to business executives to politicians to athletes, will benefit from it. Simply put, if you follow the principles by which Yogi lives his life, you have a darn good shot at becoming really successful in yours.

Like Yogi, you’re going to have tough times along the way. You need to do what Yogi does: stay on the cutting edge, but don’t go over the edge. Take risks, but guard against the ones that can kill you.

I guarantee that if you read the Prologue of this book, you won’t put it down, and by the time you reach the last page, you’ll be a better person for the experience.

As I tell all of our players: “Always go for the winners on the court—and in life. Live a principle-driven life, and have fun along the way.” In other words, live your life the way Lt. Commander Scott “Yogi” Beare lives his.



NICK BOLLETTIERI

President

IMG Academies

Prologue

*In moments of truth you're put to the test
Has your training truly made you the best?*



“KNOCK IT OFF! Knock it off!” I gave the order to my wingman, Doc, to cease our air-to-air dogfight.

“Roger that, Yogi. Knock it off!” Doc replied as he recognized the life-threatening danger I was in. My F/A-18 Hornet was in a violent, inverted flat spin and was tumbling wildly toward the desert floor at over 28,000 feet per minute. I had only seconds to live or die.

As my airspeed dropped, I released the rudder. It was too late. My Hornet, the world's most advanced and sophisticated jet fighter, flipped over on its back departing controlled flight. I pulled to the right, the plane flipped to the left. I was upside down and spinning out of control.

Contrary to the movies, flat spins are anything but flat. The plane wrenched, flipped, and jerked so violently that

my helmet hit the canopy one instant, G-forces crushed me into my seat the next, or I was jammed sideways, my shoulders painfully hitting the metal edges of the cockpit.

“Knock it off! Knock it off!” I repeated.

“Roger that, Yogi. Thirty thousand feet,” Doc radioed, informing me of our altitude. His job was to stay with me and call out my altitude to prepare me for my last resort if I were unable to right my airplane: eject at 10,000 feet. My job was to regain controlled flight.

An aviator’s mind is spring-loaded with procedures. There is no time to think or contemplate, only time to act. Immediately I shouted aloud the F/A-18 Spin Recovery Procedures verbatim. My words echoed in the cockpit as I reacted with robot precision.

“Controls release!”

“Feet off rudder pedals!”

“Speed brake in!”

“Throttles idle, check air speed, altitude, AOA,* yaw rate!”

I checked my instruments. Altitude = 26,000 feet; air speed = 0; AOA pegged negative; yaw = high. No question about it. I was in an inverted spin.

Inwardly, I became composed.

“Throttles idle.” Done.

“Rudder opposite.” Full left. Done.

“Aileron opposite spin.” Full left. Done.

“Spin Recovery Switch to *RECOVER*.”

* Angle of Attack

I was being thrashed about so violently, yet I was calm enough that I wondered for a moment if I were going unconscious. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see the recovery switch with the safety guard cover down. I reached over and flipped the cover up as I heard Doc radio, "Eighteen thousand feet." A few moments later, "Thirteen thousand feet." I reminded myself that the official eject altitude was 10,000 feet.

"Analyze." I did.

Then, with my nose low, my airspeed began to climb. The plane had begun to recover and I was regaining controlled flight. But suddenly, my airspeed indicator, altimeter, and other instruments went completely blank. The air data input that measures air flow over the skin of the aircraft must have confused the flight control computers, shutting them down.

The plane flipped again. I felt like I was on a carnival ride spinning around upside down as well as being socked from side to side.

Doc shouted, "*Eight thousand!*"

I had fallen through the 10,000-foot eject barrier.

This was not good.



Determination

*Who's to know what makes us so
Sometimes it's confrontation head to toe*



MY FATHER WAS AS ANGRY as I had ever seen him. He was still yelling at me as we drove home from the police station.

“I *said* I was sorry, Dad!” My voice rose a little, partly to be heard above his tirade and partly because I was feeling defensive and getting angry myself. I had been out of high school for four months, but I was still living with my family when my dad came to bail me out that night.

“Don’t address me in that tone of voice, mister!” he replied, cuffing me on the back of my head as he had done so many times throughout my life growing up. It reminded me of the way Bobby Knight, the now infamous basketball coach, solidified his bad-boy image by cuffing the opposing coach on the back of the head and nearly causing a melee between the two coaching staffs. Knight later said it was just a “friendly gesture” between pals. I

don't think the other coach saw it that way. And, my father wasn't being any pal of mine at that moment either.

With the head slap, I knew better than to argue or put up a fight. I sat quietly and let him rant and rave. His voice became background noise as I sulked. Then I began to reflect about how it had always been like this. I would screw something up and Dad would get pissed off—especially if he'd been drinking.

My father drank a lot. I wouldn't call him an alcoholic, but after retiring in 1957 from a career in the U.S. Army at the rank of Warrant Officer, he maintained a hard-driving, disciplined life. His drinking fit the picture. At that moment, the picture included my two brothers and me with Mom in a two-bedroom, one-bath apartment just outside of Fort Belvoir Army base, and three miles south of Old Town Alexandria, Virginia.

Only forty-one years old when he retired from the Army, Dad had served his country for twenty-two years, many of those as a paratrooper in both World War II and Korea. He was a pretty tough guy and that's the way he raised his three boys. I was the oldest, born when my father was forty-five. He was not about to change eighteen years later when he, once again, had to come down to the police station to bail me out.

"Are you listening to me?" he asked, taking his eyes off the road for a moment to glare at me.

"Yes, I am," I lied.

"Then answer my question: When are you going to grow up and stop acting like a hoodlum? Get some sense

into your head before it's too late, before you completely screw up your friggin' life?"

Dad wouldn't use the f-word around the family. It's not that he was a saint as an Army paratrooper, he simply had a code of honor that included never swearing in front of my mom or us boys. I sometimes thought that was odd because he was tough on all of us verbally, physically, and, I guess, psychologically. It *was* odd—he'd beat the crap out of me but he wouldn't swear in front of me. He doggedly lived his own personal code of ethics as a way of hanging onto his self-respect the only way he knew how—through honesty, discipline, integrity, and hard work.

"Dad, I'm not screwing up my life," I retorted.

"The h...heck you're not!" He almost slipped and said "hell." That's what clued me that he was really hot under the collar.

"You're underage. You stowed beer in the ice shavings in the dump tank of the Zamboni and let your no-account, beer-drinking, dope-taking, so-called friends into the ice rink after hours so you could party—skating and drinking into the middle of the night. You've got a job at the rink. You're given the responsibility to groom the ice with a very expensive machine and to ensure the safety of the supplies and equipment. You need to be worthy of the trust people place in you to take care of the machinery and with locking up to keep vandals out. You're supposed to be *responsible*, not the ring leader of a gang of thieves."

“We didn’t steal anything. All I did was let them in after the rink closed so we could play a little hockey,” I added a little defensively, leaving off the part that I had, in fact, stolen the beer.

“You know better than that. The police came by and caught you red-handed with unauthorized entry and possession of alcohol. They busted you and took you downtown to be booked. The only thing that saved your sorry butt was my willingness to get up in the middle of the night and come down to bail you out ... *again!* Whatever you did was dishonest and that’s the same as stealing and dishonoring your mother and your father.”

Dad cleverly wove in a little guilt and the Ten Commandments at the same time.

“Yogi, I don’t know what I’m going to do with you,” he said, exasperated. “You’ve been screwing up your whole life and your mother and I are ready to wash our hands of you. You’re eighteen years old. I’m just about this far from marching you down to the Army recruiter and signing you up.” He held his thumb and index finger about a half-inch apart. “The United States Army will make a man out of you if you aren’t willing to become one on your own.”

I almost rolled my eyes because I had heard this threat before, but I was smart enough not to surrender to another cuff on the back of my head. So, I decided instead to drift back into my own world. If I allowed myself to continue the argument, I would probably end up saying something stupid like, “Yeah, right,” or snickering at the thought of him

following through and marching me down to the poster of Uncle Sam that said, “I want **You** for U.S. Army.” I wisely kept my mouth shut.

Truth be known, my father was right on a number of things. It was also true that he really frightened me. This was especially the case when I was younger. I feared him coming home after my mom had said, “Wait until your father gets home, Yogi. He’ll deal with you!” Mom would come after me with a switch aimed at my backside, but I would laugh and run away from her. But not my father. He dealt with me all right, and it always hurt plenty.

But I was older now and a big kid. Pushing 190 pounds, I played a lot of hockey and other sports, all of which kept me in good shape. There were moments that I thought maybe I could stand up to my old man’s physical abuse but, in retrospect, he was still formidable and I wouldn’t have stood a chance.

Dad was right that night saying that I was unruly and lacked discipline. “Hoodlum” was a bit strong perhaps—maybe “heathen” was more accurate. That’s what the neighbors used to call my buddies and me. Whatever way you slice it, whatever people called us, it was true that I was headed down the wrong path, and it had been a consistent pattern.

One of my earliest and most poignant memories was when I was about seven or eight years old. We didn’t have many toys or games, given Dad’s limited retirement from the Army. One positive consequence of being poor, however, was that I developed a great imagination. It helped

that he worked at the Goddard Space Flight Center. Between visits to the center and stories from him, I was enthralled with the idea of flying, space ships, and astronauts ever since I could remember.

The living room was my space station. Cardboard boxes were cut apart and molded into jet fighters and rocket ships. The household fire extinguisher strapped to my back was the life-saving oxygen supply for my space walks. I would speak in clipped, formal tones into a wide-mouth glass jar to echo-distort my voice just enough to emulate what I imagined my radio connection to the command module would sound like. These are some of my earliest memories.

My mother used to have this all-purpose metal cart that we three boys would sometimes ride in when she walked to the Laundromat or to the Grand Union Grocery store six blocks from home. Riding in the cart or walking alongside Mom, I remember clear-as-day, the People's Drug store next to the deli where we would get Slim Jims or Yoo-hoo chocolate drinks when Mom had a little spare money.

One spring day, as we walked past the People's Drug store, I saw something in the window that made my heart stop. Mom and my brothers walked on and I lingered at the window, staring at the neatest astronaut helmet I'd ever seen. It was so cool. It was red and white with a plastic shield that could be pulled down (to avoid eye damage from the solar flares when I was space walking),

and a chin strap and everything. I had to have it. I just had to have it!

So I got it. I guess my parents taught me determination, if not good sense. Back at the apartment, my mom's purse was open and I took a \$10 bill to go buy my helmet. It never occurred to me that I would have to explain how I suddenly had money to buy such an extravagant gift for myself. I simply bought it and took it into my living room flight and space world and played pilot.

I got it all right. I got a little more than I anticipated. "Yogi, where did you get that helmet?" Mom asked when she walked into the room.

"I bought it," was my honest reply.

"Where did you get the money?"

That stymied me. I had not thought that far ahead. Too slow to think of a story, I felt the dread every kid must feel sometime in his childhood. I was a little dizzy. My face flushed and my stomach did flip-flops. I started to cry when I told her I took the money from her purse.

"Wait until your father gets home, Yogi. He'll deal with you." And she left the room, taking the helmet with her. I was so scared that I nearly peed my pants.

"Yogi, are you getting any of what I'm saying to you?" Dad jostled me out of my reverie about my early childhood screw-ups.

"Yeah, Dad, actually I am," I answered, being conciliatory, reflecting on what he was saying.

"Good," he said. "I certainly hope so." His tone softened just the tiniest bit.

Lost in thought again, I recounted a number of other times when I had disappointed my parents and, well, kind of screwed up.

Such as the time some of us rowdy kids in the neighborhood built a fort in the woods behind the community swimming pool. A little older then, in our early teens, we'd steal dirty magazines and old beat-up chairs from the janitors in our buildings and take them to the "Boys Club" fort in the bushes. Somehow one of us would get our hands on a bottle of Ripple or some Mad Dog and we'd stock the fort along with crackers, bologna, or whatever else we could pinch from the Grand Union Grocery or People's Drug.

We'd also pilfer sunglasses, golf balls, and all kinds of miscellaneous crap we had no use for. It was to be defiant; we thought it made us tough and grown up. We'd drink and get tipsy while laughing and acting as if we really were experienced with girls like the ones in the magazines. We felt like big stuff in spite of the fact that we were all virgins and would be for some time to come.

Then one day, Dad found the fort, and the magazines, and the empty bottles, and the rest of the junk. There was hell to pay. In addition to the thrashing, the yelling, the intimidation and the pure embarrassment, he required restitution.

Having learned that I had stolen most of the goods from People's Drug—it appears that I took the name of the place a little too literally—my father marched me down to the store manager. In plain sight of the other

shoppers, most of whom knew my family, he made me apologize for what I had taken and promise to pay back \$82.00, the best estimate he could come up with based upon the remnants of the stolen merchandise (and bottles) he had found in our fort.

I remember standing next to my father, his slacks with a razor sharp crease and his shirt crisp and pressed military style, while I addressed the manager with “No, sir. Yes, sir, I’m sorry, sir.” I felt like I was on trial and the manager was the unsympathetic judge and jury. Who knows? Maybe my dad was sneaking a wink at the manager signifying that they were in cahoots with each other to frighten me into submission and rehabilitation. I doubt it though, knowing my dad.

Dad was pulling in the driveway now. I couldn’t admit it to him at this point, but he was getting to me. I was thinking about my three no-account pals, Keith, Billy, and Fred. They truly were going nowhere. They were getting into drugs along with the alcohol, with no plans for college or any kind of future. They were just hanging out and drifting.

“Have you heard a word I’ve said, Yogi?” Dad asked, still with a quiet depth of frustration.

“Yes.”

“Then get upstairs and get some sleep. It’s four o’clock in the morning.”

I didn’t realize it at the time, but that night with Dad in the car was a personal tipping point for me. I needed to get out from under his oppressive wing, to be on my

own. Over time, I would reflect on his beliefs about honesty, honor, integrity, and hard work. But right then, I couldn't admit to him or to myself that I admired those traits. I needed to come to my own conclusions and chart my own course. I had to prove to him that I was not going to be a friggin' screw-up the rest of my life.

It took me about four more months to gather enough courage to determine my own destiny. Leaving my buddies, the only friends I had, would be tough. I knew they were not good for me, but they were the pals I had grown up with. Alexandria was the only town I knew. Charting an unknown course and breaking ties was going to be extremely difficult for me. But I had to do it, even for nothing more than to prove to my father that I was not a loser.





Determination

Some are destined to succeed
some are determined to succeed.

H. H. SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA



Motivation

*We're taught to go for the elusive brass ring
But what's most important is to do the right thing*



THAT BASTARD, I thought to myself. *Always putting me down.* I was walking downtown, aimlessly, and thinking about how my father always had disdain in his voice and disgust on his face when he would talk to me, or rather, yell at me. His words became my own thoughts. *Do I have any idea what I'm doing? No one in our family has gone to college. What makes me think that I'm good enough? Maybe I should just get a decent job with some security.* Always the underlying theme was to put me down, destroy my confidence.

But it did the opposite.

As I walked along Washington Street, I got more and more pissed off. My anger grew with each step I took. The worst part was the realization that my father was right about one thing: I was going nowhere fast. It had

been four months since we got busted at the ice rink. Since that time there were many similar incidents, some even worse. We just didn't get caught.

The truth was that I needed a way out from the dead-end path I was on. I thought I had a ticket out of town and to glory when I applied for a music scholarship at West Virginia University. I'd been playing the trumpet since the fourth grade and had been part of the backup group for Kaleidoscope, a local Big Band. We also had played backup for Glen Crockwell, the lead singer for a popular '70s funk band on his first solo album. I thought I had a great chance at a scholarship. What a pipedream.

I probably would have had a chance if I had "kept my chops in shape" with lots of practice. But I hadn't and by the time I auditioned at West Virginia, I'd been screwing around so much that I was in no condition to play well. I blew the audition big time, and my dream of college went up in smoke.

It wasn't a particularly warm day in May of 1980, but I was getting hotter with each step I took along Washington Street. I saw a couple of guys I knew at People's Drug getting ice cream cones. The ice cream looked good, but I just waved and walked on. I didn't want to cool off. I wanted to boil. The constant put-downs from my dad and the realization that I was a first class screw-up were fuel for my rebellion. I was determined to keep burning. I *hated* being told I was inadequate or couldn't do something. I'd show him. I'd show everyone. Somehow, I was going to prove everyone wrong about Yogi Beare.

Suddenly, I found myself standing in front of the military recruiting offices. Army was on the left. Navy was on the right. There were a number of recruiting posters that were more modern than the white-goateed Uncle Sam pointing outward with his personal invitation for me to join the Army. All the messages were pretty much the same. I walked in.

Should I go left or right? Army or Navy? Dad was a career Army man, so I turned right and went into the door that said U.S. Navy. *Screw you, Dad.*

“Good afternoon, young man. Welcome to the U.S. Naval Recruiting Office. I’m First Class Petty Officer, Steve Hernandez. How can I help you?”

“Well,” I replied, “I’m thinking about joining up with the Navy band.” This just came out and I realized that I’d said it to spite my father because he ridiculed me unmercifully when I failed the audition at West Virginia. *If I could just get into the Navy band, boy, I’d show him!*

Petty Officer, Hernandez and I talked for a few minutes about my interest in music and sports, and then he asked me if I’d be willing to take a test to determine my qualifications for the U.S. Navy.

“Why not?” *What did I have to lose?*

“Okay. I want you to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, the ASVAB. It will take about an hour. Do you have time now?”

“Sure.” I certainly didn’t have anything else to do that morning.

I must have done pretty well on the test because about ninety minutes later, Petty Officer Hernandez and I were talking more about my interests. Now keep in mind, I was no scholar. I did okay in school with a smattering of As, Bs, and Cs depending on my interest level in the course and the teacher, but no one ever mistook me for Einstein. Apparently, however, my math and science aptitude showed through.

“If you have the time, Mr. Beare,” Hernandez continued, “I’d like you to take the NFQT, the Nuclear Field Qualifying Test. What do you say?”

I was confused. On the one hand, this guy was indirectly giving me more positive attention than I’d ever remembered getting at home or in school. He was telling me that my scores on the test were good enough that he wanted to see if I had more juice. It sure felt like an attaboy to me.

On the other hand, this guy had a job to do. He needed to fill the Navy with recruits to meet his quota for enlisted men. That much I knew. But my curiosity, my feeling of being recognized for some potential talent, and my rebellion toward my father put me over the edge. I took the next test.

A couple of hours later, I was still in the U.S. Navy Recruiting Office, still talking to Petty Officer Hernandez. It was pretty weird. He didn’t exactly rub his hands together with glee, but he was clearly interested in me—the kid on his way to Nowhere, USA.

“Mr. Beare, your scores on the NFQT were impressive. In fact, you qualify for one of our really terrific programs, the nuclear power program. Let me tell you about it.

“First, you get your choice of which naval training center to attend for your eight-week boot camp: San Diego, California; Great Lakes, Illinois; or Orlando, Florida.

“Second, when you start boot camp, your rank is E-1. Traditionally, recruits who finish boot camp move up in rank to E-2. When you finish, however, because of being in this special program, you will be automatically promoted to the rank of E-3. And, after a brief stop in Great Lakes for your “A” school, you will be sent to the Naval Training Center in Orlando for nuclear power school. This is an intensive program of math, physics, chemistry, metallurgy, and thermodynamics. It is the equivalent of two years of college engineering. But let me warn you, it is 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM five days a week with mandatory study hall from 7:00 to 11:00 PM.”

Equivalent of college. I'll show that bastard. Thinking only of proving my father wrong, I didn't pay much attention to the part about how much hard work it would be.

“Third, when you complete school in Orlando, you will advance to E-4 and get a bonus of \$3,000.”

This felt a little heady. I put aside wondering about why Petty Officer Hernandez was so interested in me and reveled in the glory of being recognized for my potential to achieve—and to show my dad how wrong he was about me.

“Fourth, after Orlando, you’ll be off to one of several nuclear prototype training facilities where you will be working on actual functioning nuclear reactors that are housed in land-based units and are exact replicas of the engineering plants you’ll find on ships and submarines. You will learn everything there is to know to become a nuclear machinist mate and then be assigned to a nuclear-powered ship at sea.”

I was spinning. I was excited. I was a little scared and off balance. I left the recruiting office at 3:20 that afternoon. With each block on the three-mile walk home, I felt a little taller, a little stronger, and a little more confident.

I had joined the United States Navy!





Motivation

Desire is the key to motivation, but it's determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal—a commitment to excellence—that will enable you to attain the success you seek.

MARIO ANDRETTI

