Against All Odds | A True Story of Courage, Hope & Leadership

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Sharing My Guest Post on Serve to Lead- One of the Top 100 Leadership Blogs

"The greatest power we hold is not in what we have, but in who we truly are when we choose to ignite, engage and unleash the leader or hero within. Our greatest power lies in our ability to use what is to create what can be in our self, our lives, our relationships, our leadership and our work" – Irene Becker

Serve to Lead is an outstanding blog…and a** must read leadership book**, Thank you James Strock, Serve to Lead Blog for a body of work, a blog and three amazing books that talk loudly, boldly and fiercely to 21st Century Leadership at its best!



In this post, acclaimed success coach Irene Becker shares her personal leadership journey.

How would you summarize Irene's journey, as recounted here? My one sentence: Persistence and resilience can build a bridge between adversity and excellence.

What is* your *leadership journey? Do you recognize aspects of your experience that coincide with Irene's?…James Strock, CEO Serve to Lead

The deepest questions, insights, awareness and answers rarely come when we are sitting at the top of the mountain of success feeling like the keys to the kingdom are in our right hand. No matter who we are, no matter what we have acquired and

accomplished; our success, satisfaction, sense of personal power, value and fulfillment can change in a blink.

40th Birthday Marks Turning Point

My greatest challenge, and greatest life, leadership and success lesson began on my 40th birthday way I was thrust from the mountain of success into a very dark valley. My birthday represented a giant fork or rut in the road of my personal life and my career. It was a time when the gold I had created by the sweat of my brow had turned to dust. I had not done anything to justify what had occurred. My birthday came to pass far, far away from the success, financial security, social capital and material comforts I had worked so very hard to achieve and acquire.

I landed far, far, away from my former success as CEO of a successful multi-million dollar company, and the accouterments of success I had taken for granted. I faced a life crucible, an event of nightmarish proportion, that took me from the mountain of success to ground zero where I had to start my life and my career again. While I had overcome incredible hurdles building a formidable career, the hurdles that I faced on my 40th birthday took me to the abyss where survival itself was in question.

I spent my fortieth birthday in a dark valley that was my greatest challenge and my greatest teacher, doing the most menial of jobs… cleaning toilets. A life crucible, a crime, a tragedy had thrown me from the mountain of success to a very dark valley.With $100 dollars and a credit card in my pocket, hoping that I would be able to recover enough money to start life again, I stood there, mop in hand, vowing to show my two young children that with faith, courage, integrity one could transform even the greatest darkness into the greatest light. Why is my story important? Because, if you are a smart, fast forward thinker you know that being smart, fast, and well-trained are no longer enough. The changes, challenges and

crises we face today demand a different way of thinking, leading and living that can help us inspire, engage and lead the best in ourselves and others when the going is very tough…and even when the tough are not sure how to get going!

A Secret Revealed

It was at ground zero, doing the most menial of jobs that I learned a secret, a truth, a lesson that changed my life. Inevitably, whether by old age or a twist of fate…all the glitters is never gold. The greatest power we hold is not in what we have, but in who we truly are when we choose to ignite, engage and unleash the leader or hero within. Our greatest power lies in our ability to use what is to create what can be in our self, our lives, our relationships our leadership and our work.

The worst life crucible; the cruellest of treatment, abuse, humiliation, the greatest of failures, the pain of dealing with a threatening illness, or a personal stumbling block cannot steal the faith, hope, courage, potential and determination that burns inside us, unless we let it. The greatest success we can ever achieved cannot be measured by things that will be irrelevant when we leave this earth, but rather by our ability to live, lead and succeed to purpose. It is our ability to live, lead and succeed to purpose, our ability to truly self-actualize by unleashing our true potential that can move mole hills and mountains in our life and in the lives of others. It is this purpose, this passion this potential that creates value for others, and creating value for others is the timeless formula for success and fulfillment.

Because, it is our ability to see past what is, and create or re-create what can be that determines our ability to drive our greatest intentions forward, and reclaim our ability to live, lead and succeed to purpose. For when we are on purpose, we also discover our joy factor. When we are on purpose there is

a sense of profound happiness, fulfillment meaning and empowerment that helps us unleash our best thoughts, emotions and actions. The pilot light that connects us with our highest power and our greatest potential, the candle that can help us heal, restore and rebuild a life, a career, an organization can be found and it can be re-engaged and re-ignited.

Resilience Yields Greatest Power

It was in the valley, at a time when all seemed lost, that I discovered my greatest power-my 3Q Edge™. It was in the valley that I learned to love and accept myself for who I was, rather than measuring my worth by what I had acquired or accomplished. It was in the valley that I discovered how to use my strengths AND my stressors, my changes AND deepest challenges to build my greatest advantage and potential by developing my 3Q™'s.

I learned to optimize my strength and skills while transforming the very difficult and gut wrenching challenges, challenges and crises I faced into breakthrough results that accelerated and sustained 3Q Strengths: My IQ (mind power-whole brain thinking, greater focus, quicker ideation, creativity, action-ability), EQ (emotional intelligence-emotional management and mastery) and SQ (spiritual quotient-the power within).

Today, I have dedicated my career to helping others build their 3Q Edge™ because I believe in the power of human being better, not simply living and doing faster. I believe in our ability to unleash the business, personal and inter-personal leadership we need to live, lead and succeed to purpose in our lives, our relationships, our workplace…our world. I believe that our greatest strength, success and satisfaction cannot be sustained by what we command, control or acquire, but from what we contribute. It is the relationships that we build and sustain, our ability to inspire, engage and lead the best in ourselves and others that help us make our contribution. And,

we all have a special contribution to make; no matter how large or small every contribution counts now more than ever before.

When we do find our true power, when we build our Q strengths and potential, we come home. August 1998 I came home, and thankfully I have been there ever since. I am honored and grateful for the gift of life, and for the ability to help other rainmakers, road warriors and trailblazers open a new pathway, a critical pathway to their best work, best relationships, best leadership, and best lives by building their 3Q Edge™.

I am honored to help my clients come home by living, leading and succeeding to purpose because together we can make a difference. A difference that builds engagement, empowerment, communication, action-ability, leadership and growth in real life, real work and real-time.

Irene Becker | Against All Odds

More on Leadership, 3Q Leadership and Leading at the Speed of Change and/or in the Face of Crisis? YOU BETCHA:

Winning The New War
The NEW Leader
Women and Leadership: 10 Steps Forward for Women AND Men

From Now To How Building Social, Virtual and Cross Generational Leadership
Leadership and Enlightened Business: Coaching & Training for Sticky Results

Extraordinary Women Interview

Building the 3Q Leadership Skills YOU Need NOW

Agile Leadership and Management Toolkit
Leading in the Face of Crisis
What Does Leadership Really Mean?

5 Ways to Lead Forward by Championing the Challenge
Success = The Reach and Resonance of the Human Heart
Smart and Fast Are NOT Enough: The Need for Higher EQ/EI



Irene Becker is Chief Success Officer of Just Coach. Just Coach is a “transformational catalyst” whose unique 3Q™ approach has helped clients in Canada, USA and Europe achieve breakthrough results in performance, communication and leadership. She writes at JustCoachIt.