



XI. WITH SUCCESS COMES OPPORTUNITY

Age: 20

Review time had come and gone. Instead of being launched into the new year with greater appreciation and enthusiasm it was the complete opposite. I was shocked at the pay raise I had received. It would have been better if I hadn't been given one at all. Again, seniority won out over performance. Managers who were producing significantly less business than I was were being paid significantly more simply because of age and time with the company. I was disappointed beyond recovery.

It was as if they disconnected my turbocharger. I quickly realized I was on a train too slow to get me to where I wanted to go. I had just turned 20 and my ambition exceeded the speed at which Chess King was operating. All of a sudden I felt completely stagnated. It was time to move on. Chess King was taking me for granted. I resigned and with it came my next big life decision.

The summer of 1976 was fast approaching. I had eighteen months of documented recognition for my performance and achievements and had interest from Merry-Go-Round to take over one of their stores, so I wasn't worried about my future employment prospects. However, I had another serious life impacting decision I would have to make. I had taken a year off of college to pursue my retail ambitions.

Was it time to return to school and if so, where did I want to go. By now the University of Miami had become a distant memory. And, as much as I enjoyed Florida I wanted more. But before I was going to make my decision I needed a break. The disappointment I experienced with Chess King after having given so much was lingering. The best thing I could do before deciding where I would go and what I would do next was to return to Jacksonville and regroup.

It appeared I wasn't the only one who had become restless and wanting to do more with their life. My mentor was contemplating returning to his hometown, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. This left me with my next big life decision. Return to school or visit family and friends in Buffalo first. It had been over a year and a half since I saw them last and it was as good a time as ever to go.

My decision would not be an easy one. Was retail able to take me up the corporate ladder I wanted to climb or was returning to school the answer? Having experienced success in running a small business and enjoying every minute of it, Law School didn't seem so appealing anymore. I had become entrepreneurial at a time when it wasn't even a word yet. The one thing I did know for sure, going back to Buffalo would help me make the right decision. All of the support and encouragement I needed would be there and my spirit would get recharged. So I shuffled off to Buffalo.

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