

By Bill Guertin

The 800-Pound Gorilla

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Who's The Real Enemy?

There are very few of us in the world whose lives are interesting enough to have a book and a major motion picture written about us. There are even fewer of us that would ever know the author of such a story.

And so it was with great anticipation that I read "Playing With The Enemy," the just-released book written by my friend and Bourbonnais resident Gary Moore. There is now a major motion picture in the works based on the book, with Gary's son Toby cast as the lead. It's the true story of Gary's father, Gene Moore, and the incredible baseball talent he possessed as a young man.

Gene Moore grew up in the 1940's, and like many others his age, was in the military. His "duty," however, was to be the entertainment for the troops overseas as members of the Navy baseball team. He had a letter of intent to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers after his commitment was up, and many were predicting that he would be the greatest catcher to ever play the game.

It was in the final game of his military career that Gene shattered his ankle on a play at home plate. Because of his injury, the Dodgers reneged on their contract offer, and Gene was forced to play in the minor leagues to work on his rehabilitation, which never fully came to pass.

After his disappointing turn of events, Gene met and married his wife, had three terrific kids, and become a successful businessman and entrepreneur. With all the positives in his life, however, he never quite came to grips with his misfortune of never making it to the big leagues.

A chance meeting with an old friend from his military days many years later helped him realize a universal truth of life. Although he wasn't able to make professional baseball his career, Gene had met the love of his life and had a wonderful family, which was worth so much more than stewing over a lost opportunity.

How many of us are guilty of the very same thing?

We're passed over for a promotion at work. We think, perhaps too late, that we should have gone on to college. We should have chosen a different career path. We should have moved away years ago, or we stayed away from the area for too long. We're too young. We're too old. We're too afraid. We need more experience. We used to be talented, and now we think it's wasted away.

There are three important lessons to be learned from Gene Moore's story:

1. We have each been placed where we are for a reason. It is our obligation to ourselves and those who we care about to make the best of whatever situation life hands us, in our careers and in our personal lives. Regardless of how we got here, we can't change the past, but we can certainly affect the here and now.
2. Overdwelling on past negatives can only bring extended heartache and grief. Take whatever time you need to get over life's disappointments, and then decide it's time to move on. If that means a new career, a new life path, or a new outlook on things, decide how long you'll be sad about the past. And when that date arrives, be true to yourself, put it aside, and step into your future.

3. Be genuinely appreciative of the joy and beauty that's in your life right now. Take stock of what's right in your world and celebrate it for what it is, without dwelling on what it isn't.

If each of us were to take each of these lessons to heart, there would be no need for customer service training. We would all serve each other cheerfully, willingly, and with a genuine giving spirit. In fact, I bet you already know someone who approaches life this way. If so, he or she is worth watching and emulating.

Could someone use this advice at your workplace? If so, do him or her a favor and pass this article along. Place it on their desk or their workspace where they can see it. You might even write a brief note, saying, "I saw this in the paper and I thought of you."

Gene Moore's story is at once an inspiration and a wake-up call. Don't wait for the movie. Buy the book. I've read the last 20 pages probably 15 times, and the visual of that scene is so clear in my mind that the movie won't be able to do it justice.

Your personal story may not be as rich as Gene's. But if a Hollywood producer was looking at your personal story for a potential movie, would you be the hero, the villain, or the victim?

You are the author of your own life story. If you don't like the way the chapters are going, you always have the power to edit your own work.

Start a new chapter today. And make it a labor of love.

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