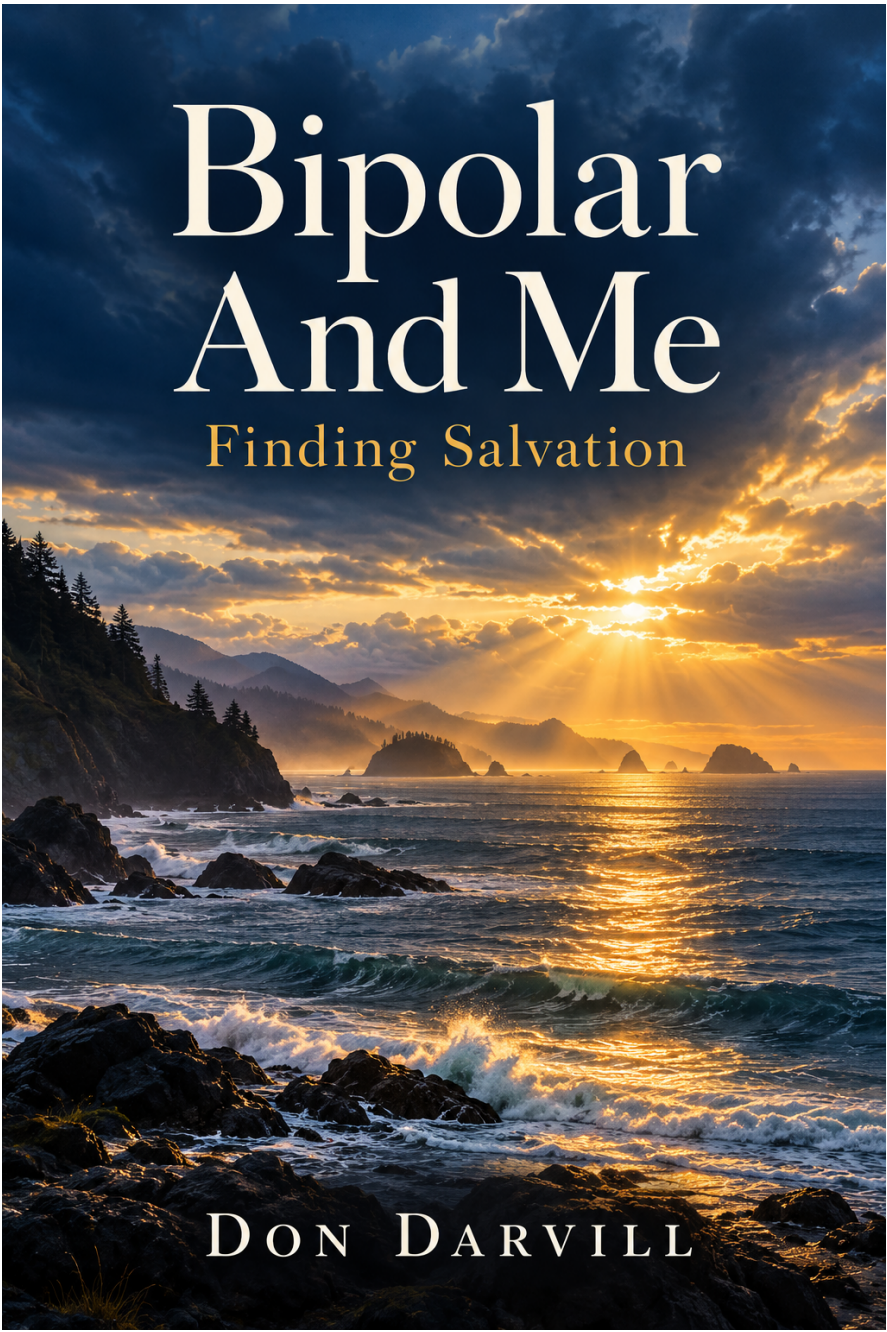




Bipolar And Me

Finding Salvation

DON DARVILL

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Don Darvill

A companion to the Better Boss Workshop Edition

Prologue

When I began writing drafts of the original Entrepreneur's Apprentice, I quickly came to the conclusion that I be impossible to tell the whole story behind my motivation to change my leadership style without addressing the catalyst behind the decision.

In the early 1990's the subject of mental disorders was still very much a topic that was rarely discussed in public, particularly if the person in question was in a prominent leadership role at a highly profiled company. At the time, popular opinion on the subject centred around the general consensus that an individual diagnosed with something like bipolar disorder would hardly be capable of dealing with the rigours and demands that a leader must face every single day.

About this companion book

This companion book brings together my personal stories. Together with the Better Boss Workshop Edition, it replaces The Entrepreneur's Apprentice.

The stories preserve their original wording.

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Salvation - noun

the preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss

Of Darkness and Light

Fall 1991

Today is Monday, and I have managed to clear enough from my calendar to free up the entire day. The summer months were incredibly busy, and now that fall has finally arrived, I have a little room to breathe. My biggest challenge since becoming an operations manager has been to find enough time to take care of basic chores around the house. The priority for today is to get the lawns cut. They are in dire need of my attention. Since my divorce, I have struggled to find the delicate balance between the ever-present demands of my job and my new role as a single dad. Our custody agreement is not specific, but for now, the boys spend three of every four weekends with me. It has not been an easy transition, but we do the best we can. Despite our disagreements, my ex-wife and I are both determined to place the welfare of our children above all else. More than anything, I just want our lives to be normal. I hate the word 'visitation' and will never use it. We live and function as a family, and that is exactly what I tell the boys. The only difference is that we do it a little less than other people do. The smartest decision I ever made was to encourage my sons to get permission for their friends to join us on any weekend they were available. I reasoned that a big part of everyday life for kids involves playing with their friends. I could not think of anything more normal than that.

The results have been far beyond my expectations. On any given weekend, my home is filled with the sights and sounds of four or more rambunctious little boys.² The roar of laughter filling the house is very cathartic. Having them around makes me forget just how much things have changed. Slowly but surely, we are finding our way.

2 The two young men that I pay homage to at the beginning of this book were regular weekend warriors at our home. I had the great pleasure of watching them grow into fine young men. They became a regular part of my 'family of men,' and I loved them both very much. I think of them often, and sometimes struggle to accept the fact that they are no longer with us.

The Incident

I wake in the fetal position, my arms wrapped tightly around my core. I am cold, and my body is shaking. All of my bedding lies in a tangled heap at the foot of my bed. My T-shirt is soaked and clings tightly to my body. Both the mattress and fitted sheet are damp. There is an unpleasant odour hanging in the air, a mixture of musk and stale sweat. This is the third time in less than two weeks that I've found myself in this situation. I strip the bed and make my way downstairs to the laundry room. With a little effort, I manage to cram the entire lot into the washing machine. I set the dial for the heavy cycle and head back upstairs to shower. I have just reached the top of the landing when the first wave descends upon me like a foreboding premonition. Within seconds, I am consumed with the kind of sadness that evokes a deep sense of loss. My face is flushed, and I can feel my body temperature rapidly rising. In an instant, I am sweating profusely. I race to the bathroom in search of a towel. The rate of perspiration is constant. It pools at my feet and rolls past my toes before collecting along the grout line. When the second wave hits, it is much stronger. Every muscle in my body tightens as if preparing for a physical assault. I am overcome with feelings of incredible loss and a sense of deep sorrow. They are the sort of emotions that are born from horrific tragedy. The whole thing feels like an out-of-body experience. I have absolutely no control over what is happening to me, and I struggle to make sense of it all. The sweat running down my face tastes salty and stings as it floods the wells of my eyes. I reach for the shower door and turn the cold water on full. Taking a deep breath, I step into the frigid onslaught. The anticipated shock of cold water is neutralized by the extreme heat radiating from my body. I look up and rinse my eyes before exposing the rest of my body to the cooling effect of the spray. Suddenly, I feel light-headed and wonder if the rapid loss of fluids is causing me to dehydrate. As a precaution, I lean my head back, open my mouth wide, and drink deeply. As my body temperature slowly returns to normal, the sweating spell begins to ebb. Adjusting the water temperature to lukewarm, I scrub my body clean. I try to concentrate on the task, but my mind is racing. What just happened here? None of this makes any sense. Stepping out of the shower, I

grab a towel and head for my bedroom. I am just about to pull jeans from a dresser drawer when the last and most powerful wave takes hold. It is overwhelming and consumes every part of my being. My lungs contract and my entire sensory system shifts into overdrive. Wave after wave of grief bombards me. The despair is so deep and so constant that tears rush down my face. In seconds, I am weeping uncontrollably. I am lost in a deep black hole of sorrow. I cannot breathe, and when I do, my lungs hurt. Just when I think it's about to end, the pattern begins all over again. Two hours later, I am physically spent. Even though my tear ducts have run dry, the sobbing continues. I fall to my knees and rest my head on the barren mattress. Sleep comes quickly, and with it, relief from my nightmare. When I wake, the room is dark, the air cool and clean. As I scan each wall, my eyes are drawn to the illuminated digits radiating from the alarm clock. The numbers are clearly visible, but they make no sense. 8:08 PM. How can that possibly be?

Using the bed for support, I pull myself up and make my way to the window. The stars shine brightly, and the streetlights illuminate the ground below. A quick survey of the front yard reveals my unkempt lawn, a sober reminder of a day that somehow simply disappeared. It seems impossible to believe, but I slept for nearly eleven hours. I struggle to find some rational explanation for what took place. It's like my entire system short-circuited and shut itself down. I reflect on the many changes that have taken place in my life over the past two years. Is this what a nervous breakdown feels like? I have no idea, but the experience has left me unsettled. The night sweats I can handle, but this is an entirely different matter. Surprisingly, I feel fantastic and charged with energy. I doubt I will sleep much tonight, so I contemplate my list of inside chores. I look down once more at my poor lawn and shake my head. Despite the bizarre events of the day, my mood is surprisingly upbeat. I even manage to make myself laugh out loud. In my mind, I am picturing a souped-up ride-on lawn mower, fitted with a highly sophisticated noise-cancelling muffler and a pair of night vision goggles. If only.

The Diagnosis

The remainder of the week is surprisingly uneventful, and I quickly slip back into my rigorous routine. This year the company has decided that all department heads should receive a thorough physical as part of an overall wellness program for senior management. All of the appointments were scheduled weeks ago. Mine is to take place at a private clinic in downtown Vancouver. Over the years, my weight has fluctuated, and I go between struggling to stay in decent shape and buckling down and really taking care of myself. This year I have taken full advantage of our office gym and have managed to lose a few extra pounds. I am in the best shape I've been in nearly a decade.

Since the divorce, I have gone without a family doctor. This will be a timely opportunity to make sure that everything is okay. As a private clinic, this facility caters primarily to professional athletes and looks more like a high-tech gym than a medical office. I am waiting for my results and looking at a brochure on common sports injuries when a tall man in his mid-forties enters the examining room. He introduces himself, and we sit down to review my numbers. It appears the workouts are paying off, as my results are good. I will never be thin, but at least by sticking to my regular workouts, I am headed in the right direction. We are nearing the end of our session when he asks me if there is anything else I would like to discuss. He has been easy to talk to and given that I am without a family doctor; I decide to share the events of last Monday with him. He sits quietly without interruption. I avoid eye contact until I near the end. When I look up, I catch a look in his eyes that betrays his concern. He smiles and asks me to describe the times I feel pressured, and the things in my life that cause me the most stress. I share with him the challenges I face balancing my business and family life. We talk about the divorce and my role as a single dad. I describe my job in detail, and when I am done, I ask him if he thinks I've experienced some sort of nervous breakdown. Rather than give me an answer, he hedges and suggests that it could be a number of different things. He recommends that I see a good friend

of his who deals with various types of emotional issues. Emotional issues? What does he mean by that? He can see that I am hesitant and assures me that the cause is likely nothing more than excess stress. He asks me to wait while he makes a call to see when I can get in. A few minutes later, he returns and hands me a card with the name and address of the doctor I am to see. Standing outside the facility, I take a moment to review the information. It is the field of medicine that gets my full attention. He is a doctor of psychiatry. A psychiatrist? Why am I seeing a psychiatrist? I am tempted to toss the card in the trash, but instead, I place it in my wallet and head back to the office.

The appointment is scheduled for three days from today. I will have to do some major juggling and move a number of things on my calendar to make it work. Once again, I am tempted to forget the whole thing, but then I remember the look of concern on the doctor's face. The fact that he has managed to get me in so quickly suggests a sense of urgency.

The psychiatrist's office is located in a large complex on Broadway in Vancouver. Traffic is light this morning, and I arrive a full half-hour ahead of my appointment. I feel anxious and concentrate on taking deep breaths. I turn on the radio, but I am too agitated to sit in the car. Instead, I step out and take in some fresh air before heading into the building. The lobby is enormous and contains a long registry of names. When I finally locate the doctor's name, I notice that there is no reference to his field. I am relieved. The last thing I want is for anyone else to know why I am here, which coincidentally turns out to be his very first question. "So, Don, why are you here?" The man sitting in front of me is probably in his mid to late sixties. He has a ruddy complexion and unkempt hair that would have been a bright copper in his younger days. Despite being a large man, there is nothing intimidating about him. Instead, he exudes a confidence that is both reassuring and calming. The question catches me off guard, and I say, "Why am I here?" "Yes, I assume that something has happened that is causing you some concern." It dawns on me that the exchange between the two doctors has been limited. It is up to me to fill in the blanks, and so I

begin by describing the episodes where I am drenched in sweat, and then progress to the events that occurred two Mondays ago. "Has anything happened since then?" he asks.

I nod. "Another heavy sweating spell. This time, it occurred at work in the middle of the day. I took a quick cold shower, and it seemed to do the trick." "All right. I want you to think back and tell me about the other times when you seemed to have been overwhelmed by emotion." I tell him I'm not sure what he means. "For instance, is this the first time you have felt such overpowering grief?" It isn't. I describe the service for my grandmother, from whom I had been estranged from for nearly a decade. In my youth, she had been a huge influence in my life. I was able to reconcile with her on her deathbed, but when I was delivering her eulogy, I became overwhelmed. Despite the fact that the feelings were similar, there was one significant difference. At the service, I was grieving for my grandmother and a lost relationship, and so I felt deep sadness. In this case, there was absolutely no reason for my emotions. My family and friends were all fine, and to the best of my knowledge, nothing bad had happened to anyone I knew. The feelings I experienced, on the other hand, were very real. The next hour and a half was taken up with a discussion about my family history and my childhood, leading to the present. His pattern is to ask a question, sit back and listen, and then write feverishly before asking another. He is a hard man to read, and I am having trouble deciding whether he thinks this is something serious. Before I have a chance to ask, he suggests we schedule a second appointment and requests that I purchase a personal journal. He would like me to begin to write any physical or emotional variances that I would consider out of the norm. He then stands to signal our time is up and reminds me to bring my journal to our next session. We will end up meeting several times in the coming weeks. The night sweats continue but are less frequent. When we meet next, I ask him if I should be taking anything. He recommends that I wait and adds that night sweats are often symptoms of something else.

To begin our third session, he focuses on comments in my journal that cover the past two days. He asks about what I describe as a superhuman burst of energy. I tell him it is euphoric in nature, a natural high, and it makes me feel almost invincible. I note that for

the past two nights I have slept less than two hours and yet I wake feeling completely rested and energized. “I notice something different in your mannerisms today,” he says. “Your voice is strong, and your answers are clear and concise. For the first time, you appear completely relaxed. How often do these periods of euphoria last?” I have been looking forward to today’s session. I want the doctor to see that there is nothing wrong with me. I am strong and lucid. I am sharp and capable. I’m also optimistic that whatever has plagued me is over. “To tell you the truth, the only time I am really aware of them is when I don’t require much sleep. I have definitely experienced them before, and they are incredibly exhilarating.” “Do you consider yourself to be someone with a good memory?” “Considering how many times I lose my keys and don’t seem to have a clue where I left them, I would have to say no to that. It’s funny though, when I am doing a speech, I can put five words on an index card and do twenty to thirty minutes, so I guess it sort of depends.” “Do you know any poems by heart?” This seems like an odd question, and I am about to say no when I remember that back in high school I had to memorize a poem for my Spanish class. The purpose was to grade my enunciation, but that was nearly twenty years ago. I share this with him. “I want you to recite it for me.” “Right now?” “Please.” Without hesitation, I begin.

“Canción del jinete.”

Córdoba, lejana y sola. Jaca negra, luna grande, y aceitunas en mi alforja, aunque sepa los caminos, yo nunca llegaré a Córdoba.

He raises his hand to indicate that I may stop. I tell him I’m surprised that it has come so easily. He does not seem surprised at all. By coincidence, he spent two years doing research in Mexico City and speaks the language fluently. He tells me that my enunciation is incredibly good. He goes on to say that remembering the words is one thing, but recalling the correct pronunciation is impressive, especially after twenty years. “How often do you practice

your Spanish?” “Not at all,” I confess. “Now that’s a pity. You really should take it up again. You’re a natural.” As the session ends, I am incredibly upbeat. I’m ready to declare myself cured when he asks me if we can change the day for our next session. I say no problem, but what I really want to say is, aren’t we done? We will continue for several more weeks, and it will not be until our seventh session that he feels comfortable with his diagnosis.

During my time as the head of the training department, I would often give speeches on behalf of the corporation on a variety of topics. In 1990, McDonald’s Canada played a major role in opening our first restaurant in the Soviet Union. This was a significant accomplishment. While many prominent North American brands were being sold in the USSR, no Western company was actually operating there. With the Cold War still very much in play, it was left up to diplomatic negotiations, and a great deal of patience exercised by the Canadian company, to finally ink the deal. I was doing a presentation to a large human resources group in Winnipeg, Manitoba. My speech was to be on McDonald’s entry into the Soviet Union. Fortunately, I was able to get my hands on the first McDonald’s commercials produced in Russian for the Soviet market. Any speaker will tell you that a big part of a successful presentation is the material you bring, and that day I had the motherlode. By sheer coincidence, there happened to be a headhunter in the audience who was seeking a keynote speaker for a major US convention in Southern California the following year. I was offered the job, but being a corporate employee, I was not permitted to receive any personal compensation. Instead, I requested that the entire fee be donated to Ronald McDonald’s Children’s Charities of Canada. By the time the event took place, I had been promoted to operations manager for the city of Vancouver. The speech would take place a few days before my seventh session with the psychiatrist.

Anaheim, California, February 10, 1992

It's just past three in the afternoon when I get the first sensation that something is about to happen. It is less intense than previous occasions but strong enough to cause me concern. I stand up and begin to pace the room. I am sweating, but the culprit, this time, is panic rather than any change in my body temperature. The second wave is much stronger. An overwhelming sense of grief takes hold, and the first waves of tears begin to stream down my face. I strip off all of my clothes and make a beeline for the bathroom. Turning the tap to cold, I step into the spray. This time, the shock to my system is more than I can bear and I am forced to adjust the

water temperature. Breathing deeply, I lean my head against the cold porcelain tile and sob uncontrollably. It's hard for me to explain what these episodes are really like. In my descriptions, you will note that I do not use the word depressed. The reason is simple: In my case, I am not depressed. What I feel is a great sense of sadness, the kind of sorrow that comes with deep personal loss and tragedy. Right now, it is overwhelming and very, very real. The shower is refreshing, but the feelings remain strong and present. I managed to stop the tears long enough to contact the woman who has been my liaison with the company. I explain that I am not feeling well and to ensure that I will be ready for tomorrow morning, I must decline the invitation to dinner. She is professional and says she understands, but I can tell that she's disappointed.

I consider it a great privilege to stand before an audience and deliver an entertaining performance. I have worked many long hours getting ready for this keynote address. This will be my moment, and I know the calibre of presentation that I am capable of delivering. I will not have it taken away from me. I practice long into the evening hours, forcing myself to work through the utter sense of despair. When I finally lay down, I am physically spent. Despite my exhaustion, sleep eludes me for most of the night. I wake before the alarm clock and turn towards the sound of rain tapping on my window. Black clouds darken the morning sky and mirror the dark emotions that blanket my mind. In the early morning light, I contemplate my options. Any thoughts of bowing out are quickly

dispelled. I am determined that these people will get an entertaining presentation with boundless energy. I must find a way to make that happen. I think of the old Hollywood cliché, 'the show must go on.' I have no idea if I can pull it off, but I have made up my mind that if I don't, I will go down fighting. I begin to run through the opening in my mind as I prepare to take a long hot shower. Finally, I make it down to the conference hall. I open my presentation with a Russian television commercial followed by a humorous anecdote that I know is a surefire winner. The first roar of laughter is the boost that I need, and I'm on my way. Everything is going remarkably well until I come to a small bit designed to poke harmless fun at the CEO. The problem is that I can't recall his name, first or last. When the moment comes when his name becomes critical to delivering the punch line, I hesitate. My only hope to salvage this mess is to point my finger at him and say, "You know, what's his name over there?" Unfortunately, it bombs. Instead of laughter, there is complete silence, and it quickly dawns on me that everyone knows I have forgotten his name. A cardinal rule of public speaking is that when something goes wrong, you pause, gather your thoughts, take a deep breath, and carry on. Instead, I resort to a total rookie move and go for a cheap laugh at the expense of the CEO. The line went something like this. "You know what they say, great men are born to do great things and are long remembered for their greatness," pause for effect, "and then there's what's his name." The roar of laughter breaks the uncomfortable silence, but I immediately regret it the moment it is out of my mouth. Even though I am working under incredibly challenging circumstances, there's no excuse for what I did. You never make fun of those who brought you to the dance. It was unprofessional, and I know it. The look on his face confirms my regret. I manage to recover with twenty more minutes of solid material culminating in a standing ovation. When we break for lunch, the CEO approaches me. As soon as I see him walking toward me, I instantly remember his name. Too little, too late. We shake hands, and he guides me away from the crowd. Before he can speak, I try to explain the circumstances around my indiscretion and offer my sincere apology for the cheap shot. I acknowledge that it was completely unprofessional and in poor taste. The expression on his

face suggests that my apology has fallen short of the mark. It's clear in his mind that the joke crossed the line. There is no doubt that if I were one of his employees, this would be my last day. "I have a good mind not to pay your fee," he says. I understand how he feels, and I remain calm when I reply. "Then it is a good thing that I'm not collecting a fee today. I'd like to remind you that your money is going to a very worthy charity. Now if you would like me to call them and explain why they will not be receiving your generous donation, then I will be happy to do that on your behalf." I may be guilty of a major faux pas, but there is no way that the charity is going to suffer for my indiscretion. His eyes lock onto mine for several seconds. I am uncertain whether he is trying to determine if I this is a bluff or not. The standoff abruptly ends, and he simply turns and walks away. I see him approach a young lady, and the two of them look my way. A moment later, she approaches and hands me a check made out in the full amount to RMCC. I thank her and quickly show myself out.

I had one personal request when we were putting the contract together. After my presentation was over, I wanted to be taken to Disneyland. I was looking forward to capping off what I believed would be a triumphant speech with an afternoon spent at 'the happiest place on earth.' They fulfilled their end of the bargain, and soon I found myself surrounded by a host of characters that I grew up watching on television. Unfortunately, even a combination of the Magic Kingdom and a return of the warm California sunshine cannot lift me out of my darkness. Still, as I reflect on the day, I am enormously proud of myself. I have never faced such adversity, and despite the one unfortunate misstep, I have somehow managed to pull the whole thing off. As the sound of children's laughter fills the air, I sit on a bench next to the Matterhorn and make notes in my journal.

Two days later, I am back in Vancouver and ready to begin my seventh session. I am looking forward to sharing my Anaheim experience with this man who has become my most trusted ally. Even though I am extremely proud of what I was able to

accomplish, I can no longer deny the fact that something is seriously wrong. When I look up, he is staring out the window; his thoughts a million miles away. Suddenly he stands and gently places his hand upon my shoulder. As he looks into my eyes, my heart begins to race. In this critical moment, I have no idea what he is about to say, but somehow I know it is going to change my life. “Don, I want to begin by saying that I think it is highly unlikely that this all began a few weeks ago. I believe that there have been signs for a long time that may not have been quite as acute as what you are now experiencing. I suspect that this may have even contributed to some of your marital problems. “Taking into account everything you have shared with me over these many weeks, it is my professional opinion that you have bipolar disorder. It results from a chemical imbalance that short-circuits the part of the brain that regulates moods and emotions. Some people have infrequent episodes and can go weeks, months, and even years without a single serious incident, while other people experience more frequent episodes that are far more severe. Yours is one of the most aggressive cases that I have ever personally come across. We refer to the most extreme cases as rapid-cycle bipolar disorder.” I am stunned and can barely breathe. “Are you telling me that I am mentally ill?” “I am saying that there are many different types of mental disorders, and this happens to be one of them. There are medications that can help you manage your life, but you need to understand that they are not a cure.” As the session ends, I feel numb. He asks me if there is anyone he can call who could come pick me up. I assure him that I am capable of driving myself home. As I pull into my driveway, my phone rings. It’s my secretary, wondering where I am. At first, I’m confused by her question until I remember that I have a full slate of work ahead of me today. I try to remain calm as I tell her that an emergency has come up and that I will have to take the rest of the day off. I ask her to make my apologies and see if she can reschedule my meetings and appointments. I place my head on the steering wheel, and for the first time since the diagnosis, I allow myself to cry. This time, the tears are not caused by some freakish imbalance but by genuine sadness. I am only thirty-seven years old and for the first time in my life, I feel completely helpless. What am I going to do? I feel nothing but shame. I know that none of this is my fault, but it does nothing to change the way I feel. I am deeply ashamed.

How could I let this happen? I am a bright person. I am also articulate and clear-minded. The doctor has to be wrong. This is a nightmare, a total nightmare. The only problem is; I am not dreaming. Mental illness is a topic that tends to make everyone feel a little uncomfortable. Before my diagnosis, I had never even heard of bipolar disorder. We have a tendency when it comes to mental illnesses to lump them all together and base our opinions on behaviors associated with some of the most serious ones such as schizophrenia, autism, and paranoia. We see mentally ill people as unstable, dysfunctional, and unpredictable. Many of us would have a hard time imagining a mentally ill person capable of being an effective leader. It's just a reality of the stigma that is often attached to the disease. I think the biggest personal lesson I learned from my own experience is that leadership comes in all shapes and sizes. For me, it was all about investing in people who would play an important part in helping me to build a successful business. Some of the most powerful and effective leaders in the world are soft-spoken and humble people. Leadership is what you make it. While I would never wish my illness on my worst enemy, I learned a long time ago that only I can choose to see it as a handicap.

The upper management of our company is predominantly a collection of alpha males. We have some talented women making a mark for themselves, but for now, this is still very much a boy's club. It is a highly competitive environment where any sign of weakness is viewed by others as an opportunity. It might sound harsh, but it is all part of the toughness, both mental and physical, that is required to be successful when competing for the top positions in any large organization. The more I think about the environment I work in, the more convinced I am that no one must ever know. I don't know what I am going to do. I am due back to work tomorrow, and I am scared to death that something will happen that will expose the truth. I wrestle with my dilemma all night. Sleep will not come, so I sit in the kitchen and rest my head in my hands. I have a second sabbatical coming up in the new year that would entitle me to just over three months off when combined with my regular holidays. At first, the idea sounds appealing, but then I realize there are two significant problems. The first is that when I return, I will still have

the disease. Hopefully, I will have had some success with the drugs, and perhaps I will have found other ways to minimize the effects, but I will still have to return to the rigours of my job. The bigger problem is that I will have to explain why I am requesting the time off on such short notice. Although I have the highest regard for the men who run our company, I am not ready to go that far. I am convinced that the truth will leak out, and I will never be taken seriously again. The shame that overwhelms me, and the genuine fear of others knowing, forces me to embrace a far more drastic decision. In the morning, I will resign and start my life all over again.

To say that there is a buzz flying around the office would be an understatement. My resignation takes everyone by surprise, and there is great speculation about the reason. In my letter, I state that I have always loved to teach, which is true, and I have decided

that before I get too old, I would like to complete my education and earn my teaching degree. I suspect that I will be called into a meeting, and it occurs on Tuesday afternoon. At the table are Ken Bathurst, head of human resources and a real quality guy. Next to him is my direct boss, Arnie Nelson, the company vice president and an extraordinary man whom I fully respect. The final member of the group is Ron Marcoux, the executive vice president whose praises I have already sung but bear repeating. He has been at the helm of the company for all the years that I have worked there. I have nothing but the highest regard for this man. They grill me extensively but to no avail. I can tell that they're not buying my reason for leaving, but I hold firm. This has come completely out of nowhere and makes no sense to any of them. It takes every fiber in my body to remain calm. The truth is, I have absolutely no idea what I am going to do, but I cannot let on that I am terrified. I apologize for the short notice. I know that our Christmas party will occur in just a few days. For our company, this is not only the annual office and managers' party but also the time when all the strategic promotions in the company are announced. I know that I've left them little time to choose my successor, but I also know that this is a company way ahead of its time when it comes to succession

planning. There is always a Plan B waiting in the wings, and whatever it is, it's about to be put into play. The meeting ends cordially with handshakes and best wishes all around. I do not attend the Christmas party. It would be the perfect opportunity to say goodbye to everyone, but I'm not sure I would be able to hold it together. I also know I'd be asked a thousand questions I have no intention of answering. My last day will be the fifteenth of December, and then I'll take my remaining holidays. When a high-profile job such as this one changes hands, there is really no transitional period. The new person is anxious to get started and will have their own agenda. They are more than capable of taking over, and so they quietly wait in the wings.

When I walk out of the office on my last day, I am totally convinced that I will never set foot in this building again. As it turns out, that won't be true. My good friend fate is about to intervene for the second time in this story. It will not happen for several months, but when it does, it will occur in a most unusual way.

It was a tough Christmas. I have just given up the security of a job that has been my bread and butter for more than two decades. The boys are to spend the better part of the holidays with me, and I pray that I will not suffer a major episode. Fortunately, I am spared, and I do my best to make it an enjoyable time for everyone. I put on a brave face when I tell my family that I am leaving McDonald's. Becoming a teacher was something I seriously considered when I was much younger. This has become far more than a convenient excuse for my departure. It's a real opportunity for a brand new start, away from the people who know me best. I need to research my options for acquiring my degree, but first I must begin my treatment. During my final visit to see my psychiatrist, I thank him for the way he took me through the process. I can tell that he is genuinely concerned about my welfare. I elect not to tell him that I've left my job but agree to treatment, provided it is not local. I am

paranoid about any paper trail. It may sound irrational, but it's the only way I will do it. He tells me that he has a colleague in Washington State whom he will ask to take my case. It happens that there is an upcoming session at a facility just outside Seattle for people dealing with the disorder. I have no idea what to expect, but I agree to attend. He strongly suggests that I have members of my family participate in the meeting since it will be informative for my support team. I thank him again, and we hug. Support team? I'm just beginning to come to terms with what I'm dealing with myself, so I opt to attend the session on my own.

We have just finished the education/informational side of the workshop when we are asked to form smaller groups and spread out in the room. In my group is a mother with her daughter who has just been diagnosed. She is only eighteen years old. Next to them sits a man in his early forties, who has also just received his diagnosis. He is joined by his wife, their young daughter, and their teenage son. We are asked to share our personal experiences, but when it comes around to the other fellow's turn to speak, he begins to weep instead. He looks weathered and broken. As he struggles to gain control, I see his son rise and wrap his arms around his father. With the strength in his voice of someone far beyond his years he says, "Don't worry, Dad, everything is going to be just fine. I am going to take care of you from now on." As I look at his wife with tears flowing down her face, I realize their lives have been forever changed. I am feeling so bad for this man that I nearly forget that I am in the same predicament. As I witness the despair that surrounds me, I make an important decision. I will not do this to my family. I may have failed at marriage, and I may have just quit the only job I have ever known, but there's no way I will give up my role as protector of my sons. They are just ten and eleven years old, and it's my job to be their strength. It was never meant to be the other way round. I look again into the eyes of these women who cannot help but feel pity for their loved ones. I realize that for these families, the traditional dynamic will never be the same. When I think of my family, of my mother and father in particular, and how much they've already sacrificed for me, I will not burden them with this. They are worriers by nature, and this will have a drastic impact

on the quality of their lives. Through time and circumstance, I have become the dominant strength in our family. I am the go-to guy, the one who can be counted on for anything. I will not allow that to change; I won't let it happen. This could have been the end of the Quadrant Leadership story were it not for a chance encounter that would mark my return to the company I thought was lost to me forever.

A popular feature of sit-down restaurants in the early nineties in Canada is decadent salad bars. One of these restaurants is located in the city of Surrey and is a particular favourite of my boys. The time of year is now early March. We have just been seated when I feel a tap on my shoulder. It is Ron Marcoux. He and his wife Gayle are sitting across the room. He waits for the boys to head up to the salad bar before speaking. He begins by asking how I am doing, and I give him the perfunctory all's well. What he is to say next will change the course of events one more time. "I know your reasons for leaving were personal, and I respect that, but I thought after all of these years, we could be truthful with one another. You said that becoming a teacher was why you left, but I don't buy it. I think you owe me the truth." He can see that the boys are about to rejoin me at the table. I have just a few seconds to reply. In that moment, I make the decision to trust this man who has been such an important influence in my life. "You're right, Ron; there is more to the story. If you are going to be around the office on Monday, I will drop by and share it with you." "I appreciate that. How about ten o'clock?" "That sounds fine. I'll see you then." Ron was right, I did owe him a better explanation. He had been a great supporter of my place in the company. At one point, he even appointed me a guest advisor to join him at the board meetings held in Toronto. On the plane ride down, he would talk frankly about things that most people were never privy to hear. I used to think that he was testing my ability to hold confidence, which I always did. I never discussed any of our conversations with anyone else. We meet on Monday morning, and I tell him the entire story. When I finish he says, "Is that all? Is that the reason you walked away from your career?"

I'm not certain he grasps the seriousness of my illness, and I am about to say so when he continues. "You are not the first, nor will you be the last guy to have to deal with these types of issues." I sense that he has no intention of being more specific, so I decide to take him at his word. "When can you start?" he asks. "You mean you want me to come back? "Of course I want you back. I will have to meet with Arnie to go over the details, but one of us will get back to you within a day." The only request I make is that only he, Arnie, and Ken are to know the truth. He gives me his word that my confidence will be kept. I leave both elated and terrified. I feel so genuinely grateful to be valued like this, but I am unsure how the pressures of the job will affect my illness. I assume I will start with a demotion since there are no department head jobs available, but instead, I am returned to my full salary and put on special projects. My service record is restored, and my time away is recorded as my second sabbatical. Just before the hectic summer months arrive, a position opens up, and I am once again an operations manager. Over the course of the next two years, I will perform my duties to the very best of my ability. By the summer of 1993, the challenges of my illness and the rigors of the job are beginning to place a significant toll on my health once more. I sit down with Arnie to discuss my future and to make a request. I asked that he and Ron consider giving me an opportunity to become an owner/operator. By implementing Quadrant Leadership, I believe that I will be able to create the breathing room I need to manage my illness. He assures me that he will discuss it with Ron and let me know when they have made their decision. I will not hear back for several months. On a warm autumn afternoon, I receive the news that I have been longing to hear. In the new year, I will become an owner/operator with my own restaurant right here in the city of Vancouver.

Fate was to intervene, not once but twice at a critical time in my life. What were the odds that a pre-scheduled routine physical would take place just days after my first episode, or that a simple dinner out with my sons would lead to a chance encounter with Ron Marcoux? There is no doubt in my mind that had there been no bipolar disorder; there would have been no Quadrant Leadership. From personal tragedy came a remarkable discovery. The results

that my company was able to achieve even as I struggled to deal with my new reality are what give Quadrant Leadership its credibility. “The more people know, the more they are capable of contributing” is so much more than a catchy slogan. It is the payback that comes from the time invested in the model. By significantly improving the performance of my employees, I drastically improved my odds for success. What constantly amazed me was just how much more my employees were capable of when given the opportunity to exercise their true potential. There is no doubt in my mind that any boss who is prepared to commit to this extraordinary approach to leadership, and fully embrace the Quadrant Leadership Model, will achieve results far beyond their wildest expectations. Before I leave my personal story behind and move on to the nuts and bolts of Quadrant Leadership, there is one more group of people I would like to recognize. They played a critical role in my success, and I will forever be in their debt. My psychiatrist was right when he said that I would need a solid support team. For me, that group has always been my extraordinary friends. I am blessed with many rich and enduring friendships. I consider myself to be a lucky man. My philosophy is that you can never have too many friends, and I will forever be grateful for their unwavering support. The greatest gift they ever gave me was never to change the way they saw me. I could not ask for more.

The Gift of Humility



Ronald McDonald House

December 25, 1994

Christmas morning and the house is still; the sound of youthful exuberance and excited anticipation is no longer present. It is hard to believe that it has been four years since my divorce. While I have come to enjoy my life as a single dad, this is the one day of the year when my heart longs for days gone by. I will not see the boys today; a decision I have come to accept. For the children of broken homes and shared custody, this is often a day of travel. Handed off from one loving parent to the next, the clock ticking, these are the true peacekeepers in this season of goodwill. I recall my own childhood and how my parents would never travel on Christmas Day, no matter who offered the invitation. As far as they were concerned,

Christmas Day was for the children to play and enjoy their treasures. Their selfless act is the reason I make no claim on this day. I take satisfaction in knowing that tomorrow will be our day. As I stare out the window, I am drawn to the sullen sky. While I have never subscribed to the notion that my episodes can be triggered by weather, I cannot deny that I fare much better in sunshine. For me, most of my days are like strolling down the deck of a giant ocean liner. When the seas are calm, the effort is free and easy, but as the waves begin to crest, and the great boat is tossed from side to side, balance becomes my top priority. So much of my life is about finding my internal balance. On those occasions when I am unable to take refuge from the most treacherous of storms, I hold on tight and pray that I will not be swept overboard. On the one day of the year when I feel the greatest sense of loss, I am overcome with feelings of enormous self-pity. Life just doesn't seem to be fair. I am so tired of the roller coaster of emotions that continue to push my mental and physical welfare to the brink. I can barely remember what normal feels like. The great irony is that I have so much to celebrate. My first year in business has been a resounding success, and save for a few minor setbacks in the beginning, I am on solid ground. We are making excellent progress with Quadrant Leadership, and my company's results have far exceeded my expectations. In every sense of the word, I should be jumping for joy, and yet I choose to dwell on my misfortunes. As the alarm clock suddenly springs to life, I groan. While I would like nothing more than to pull the covers over my head and sleep the entire day away, I remember the promise I made to Anne. Regardless of how I might feel, I will not let her down.

November 6, 1994

Today I am attending an owner/operator's meeting at our regional office in Burnaby. This is the same facility where I spent many years on the corporate side of McDonald's, working in both the operations and training departments. I am about to make my way into the meeting room when I see my former secretary, Linda. She is waving in my direction. After a minute playing catch-up, she tells me that she just got a call from Ronald McDonald House. For anyone

unfamiliar with Ronald House, it's a not-for-profit organization that provides accommodations for sick children with life-threatening illnesses and their immediate family members. The only stipulation is that the family must live outside of the major metropolitan areas, making travel their only option to receive treatment. The original Vancouver Ronald House is located on Angus Drive in the upscale neighbourhood of Shaughnessy on the west side of the city. It is a beautiful old manor that in 1983 was converted to a thirteen-bedroom facility. It is close to Vancouver Children's Hospital, making it an ideal location. Linda tells me that Anne, the house manager, is looking for volunteers to help out on Christmas Day. Since my restaurant is close by, she thought there might be someone on my staff who would be interested in helping out. I let her know that I will start making inquiries as soon as I get back to the restaurant. In 1994, the Vancouver Ronald McDonald House was one of only a handful of Ronald McDonald Houses in all of North America that remained open on Christmas Day. In most cities, families staying at the house are required to make temporary relocation arrangements. Anne is a remarkable woman. She has made it clear that her goal is to keep the house open on Christmas Day. She knows how difficult and expensive it can be for families to find temporary accommodation in a city like Vancouver. She is also aware of how any disruption to a sick child's routine can affect their health and welfare. Even though she will be travelling back to England to be with her own family for the holidays, she is determined to make this happen. A few days later, I call her up. While we have never formally met, our paths have crossed at many fundraisers. This will mark the first time we will speak one-on-one. I let her know that I have a few promising leads, but so far no firm commitments. I took the opportunity to get a better idea of what the job entails and the time commitment that will be involved. Anne explains that the biggest job will be to prepare a traditional Christmas dinner for all the families staying at the house, as well as any relatives who will be joining them. This year the number is expected to be between forty-five and fifty people. She goes on to explain that while every bit of help is appreciated, what she's really looking for is someone who is prepared to spend the entire day at the house, preparing the meal, setting up all of the tables for dinner, and then remaining behind to do the massive cleanup. As I listen to

the heady job description, I quickly realize that none of my employees will be able to make such a major commitment on Christmas Day. I am about to tell her when it suddenly dawns on me that I do know someone who will not only be free for the entire day but is more than capable of doing the job. She is delighted with the news, thanks me for my generous commitment, and tells me that I have taken a huge weight off her shoulders.

Christmas Day

It is just past ten a.m. when I arrive at the house. As I ascend the staircase, I see that most of the lights on the main floor are off. I am unsure whether I should simply walk in or wait for an invitation. I decide that since no one knows who I am, I will ring the doorbell.

It's one of those old-fashioned knobs shaped like the end of a key. You must turn it all the way around to generate a sound. After three unsuccessful attempts to capture anyone's attention, I am about to try the doorknob when I hear the pitter-patter of tiny feet running across a hard surface. Seconds later, the door swings open and I am greeted by a little boy no more than five years old. The tiny wisps of hair atop his head are complemented only by his enormous chubby red cheeks. He is dressed in blue jeans and a Superman T-shirt that does little to cover his distended stomach, leaving his outie belly button to fend for itself. Before I can ask him if there are any adults I might talk to, he is off. As I step into the dimly lit foyer, I can see an office to my immediate left and a sitting room to my right. Farther down the hall, I see light streaming from the kitchen. As I approach, I hear voices. "I just saw a car pull up. I think it might be the McDonald's guy Anne was talking about." "Do you think he'll have the answer?" "He should, he's in the restaurant business." Personal experience has taught me that it's never a good idea to eavesdrop on someone else's conversation, even when it appears that you are the subject of discussion. I wait just long enough for the room to grow silent before rounding the corner. With initial introductions out of the way, I am relieved to find out that both ladies are regular volunteers. Their only concern is that neither has cooked at the house before, let alone for fifty people. They draw my

attention to the objects of their previous conversation. There, sitting atop the industrial ovens, are two of the biggest turkeys I have ever seen in my life. Each bird weighs more than 37 pounds. They tell me that so far they have not been able to find a cookbook with instructions for a turkey of this size. Without the Internet to search or a YouTube video to watch on the secrets to cooking a behemoth turkey, we are on our own. I can see that the ladies are looking to me for direction. As they wait for me to speak, I realize just how important it is that we get this right. I recommended that they each call their family and friends to see if anyone can provide them with some useful

information. While they are busy doing that, my job will be to pull all the ingredients together to prepare the stuffing. So far I have not seen another soul, save for my little friend, so we will not bother anyone staying at the house. As I begin my quest, I am struck by the sheer size of the kitchen. It is enormous and extremely well designed, with plenty of room for each family to have its own utensil drawers and cupboard space. Germs are a real concern in an environment like this, so sharing is out of the question. All the appliances are of industrial quality, and the dishwashers are set to extremely high temperatures for optimum sanitation. The center Island is massive, lined with row upon row of pullout drawers full of pots and pans of every size. It takes me several minutes to gather all my ingredients. By the time I am ready to start, the ladies have returned from their calls. With input from three reliable sources, the consensus is that we will make sure the turkeys are in the oven by no later than 11:30 a.m. With the first big decision of the morning out of the way, we're off and running. I am busy scoring a huge pot of Brussels sprouts when the little boy reappears. This time, he has his mother in tow. As they enter the kitchen, I introduce myself. I tell her that her son would make an excellent doorman. She points him in the direction of the tables located at the far end of the kitchen. Just as I am transferring my pot of sprouts to the top of the stove, I hear her say, "Are you ready, little man?" When I look up, I can see that she has just finished preparing a syringe filled with clear liquid. As he turns his head, she pierces his flesh in one quick motion and begins to press down on the plunger. He flinches but does not cry out. Instead, he holds his breath until she removes the needle. She places a small piece of cotton batten on

the puncture wound and without a word of instruction he takes hold of it and applies pressure with his tiny little fingers. "Can I have a Spiderman Band-Aid, Mommy?" "Of course you can sweetie. Just remember that there are only three of those left.

With the Band-Aid firmly affixed, he heads off on another adventure. I shake my head as I speak. "That was amazing. How old is he?" "He turns five in three weeks. I am learning how to do all his injections so that we can go home. He spent nearly two months in Children's Hospital, and we have been here at Ronald House for a little over a month. I have two other children at home I have not seen in several weeks. I talk to them every day on the phone, but they are having a very tough time." "Did they not come down for the Christmas holidays?" "No, they are still back home in Creston. It's just so expensive, and when we brought Tyler down to the hospital, my husband had to use up all his holidays. I've got my fingers crossed that the doctor will give us the okay to go home next week. As she draws near, I can see the dark circles of restless sleep. Clearly, the demands of caring for a sick child have taken a great toll on her. "Is there anything I can do to help?" she asks. "I think we are good, but thanks for offering. Why don't you just enjoy your Christmas day?" As soon as it is out of my mouth, I realize how ridiculous that must sound to her. She gives me a tired smile and says, "Believe me when I say that I wish I could. As I watch her ascend the stairs, I feel like such a fool. I have been so consumed by self-pity that I did not even stop to consider what the people in this house are going through. I doubt any of them were looking forward to spending Christmas Day at Ronald House. I have been brooding over something as trivial as not being able to see my boys today. I have just met a woman who has not seen her daughters in weeks, and her precious little boy is fighting for his life. I am so ashamed of my behaviour that I begin to feel nauseous. How could I have been so incredibly self-absorbed? It is embarrassing to think that my plight was so much worse than anyone else's.

Parents in this house are faced with the very real possibility that their child might die. As a Dad, I cannot begin to imagine their pain. As I struggle to regain my composure, I suddenly remember

something my old friend Brian Midgley once told me. I had confessed to him that I had handled a tough situation badly and wanted his advice on how to make it right. He said that if I truly regretted my actions, I must begin by forgiving myself. It is only by forgiving ourselves that we can reset the compass in our mind that will clear the path to a better decision. I never forgot his words and realize I must start right now. Through forgiveness, I am able to rid myself of the guilt that has made me feel like such a fool. I am now convinced that my coming here today was in no way a coincidence. This whole experience was meant to be. I have been properly humbled and for that, I am truly grateful. The invisible chains that have tied me to my illness from the beginning have been torn free. Never again will I allow myself an ounce of selfpity. I may not like what I have to deal with, but I will not let my illness make me a victim. I feel a genuine sense of joy, and like a breath of fresh air, I am completely energized and ready to take on the rest of the day. As the noon hour draws near, more families begin to appear. Anne requested that we take our break over the lunch hour to allow each family their personal space in the kitchen. I am just sitting down to a nice cup of tea when a little girl of about ten approaches. She is wearing a baseball cap that reads, "Hair is highly overrated." "Are you the man who owns McDonald's?" she asks. "Well, I don't own all of them, but I do own one." Her eyes widen as the rumour is confirmed. "Do you like McDonald's?" I smile. "Oh yes. I love Chicken McNuggets with lots of ketchup. My mom says when I get better we can go to McDonald's, and I can have a Happy Meal." Just then, I notice that she is wearing a Disney T-shirt with the 101 Dalmatians theme.

"I like your T-shirt. Did you know that McDonald's was giving out the Dalmatians in Happy Meals just a few months ago?" She nods her head yes and tells me that 101 Dalmatians is her favourite Disney movie. She then tells me that she only got a chance to collect four Dalmatians before she got sick. I tell her that's too bad, and then add, "How would you like to have them all?" She looks at me in disbelief. "I'll tell you what. You go get your mom so we can make sure it's all right with her. If she says it's okay, I'll have someone bring over all 101 tomorrow." Without the slightest warning, she lets

out one of those ear-piercing screams that only a ten-year-old girl is capable of. Before I have a chance to tell her I will also include some Chicken McNuggets for her and any of the other kids in the house that would like some, she's off to find her mother. Her quick departure may have just saved my eardrums from a second assault. The dinner goes off without a hitch. Both turkeys were done to perfection, and we got many positive comments on how moist and tender they were. I am completely exhausted when I leave the house at nine p.m. I will sleep well tonight. Tomorrow, I'll pick up the boys, and we'll spend the entire day together. It has become a tradition that the group of weekend warriors that make up my "family of men" will also be joining us. I look forward to seeing them all, and there will be presents under the tree for everyone. I will likely hug the boys a little tighter and for a little longer than they would prefer, but I will do it just the same.

That Christmas would mark the first of ten consecutive Christmas days that I would spend at Ronald House.² Each as special as the last, and each, a gentle reminder that no matter how tough I think I might have it, there will always be someone, somewhere, who is dealing with something far worse than I. When I return to work after the holidays, I allow myself the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of my labour. I have managed to make Quadrant Leadership an intricate part of my business, and now as a new year dawns, I look forward to seeing just how much more we can accomplish. I highly recommend that every boss take the time to volunteer their services somewhere where they are not always the person in charge. Playing the best supporting role you possibly can will serve to remind you just how important every job in your own business is. Leadership is not always about being the final decision maker. Sometimes it's about letting other people play that role. It takes nothing away from who you are. If anything, it shows great wisdom. One of the most common misnomers about Quadrant Leadership is that you are giving up many of the things that leaders are supposed to do. I would argue that the role of a leader is to achieve the best results in the most ethical way possible. How you go about accomplishing that task has nothing to do with the paradigm of leadership to which so

many people subscribe. Your most important job is to build a successful business. In the end, if you are able to provide others with the kind of insight and knowledge that will serve them well as they continue their journey in life, then how can that be anything but good?

One of the biggest misconceptions about Ronald McDonald House is that it is fully funded by McDonald's Restaurants. While the corporation and affiliated owner/operators actively support all of the houses in North America through a variety of fundraising endeavours, each Ronald House is a stand-alone, non-profit organization that must continually raise funds to meet its annual operating budget. I invite you to give generously to the house that love built.

And in The End



The Beast - Palm Springs, California

Sunlight does wonders for my illness, so every winter I make it a priority to spend as much time as possible in Southern California. I have a small camper van that serves as my mobile home away from home. I call her The Beast, and even though she is now more than thirty years old, she is in remarkable shape and incredibly reliable. My destination for this trip is a beautiful park just north of the Mexican border. It is located in the historic town of Chula Vista and sits adjacent to the local marina. I am looking forward to getting settled in. I have reserved a premium spot complete with spectacular ocean views. So far, the trip down has been uneventful. I have made excellent time this morning, and since my day began well before sunrise, I am looking forward to a nice leisurely breakfast.

Five minutes later, I am exiting the freeway. The off-ramp rises slightly before turning sharply to the right. As I approach my first intersection, I spot a small directional sign. Weathered by a steady diet of sun and wind, the letters are badly faded and impossible to read. Fortunately for me, the terrain is flat and unobstructed. A quick scan of the horizon reveals the outline of several buildings to the west. As I draw closer, I am surprised to discover that what resembled a small town from a distance is, in fact, a large industrial park. The warehouses and loading bays that occupy the park are situated on beautifully tree-lined streets that betray the primary purpose of the facility. I am so preoccupied with my surroundings that I quickly lose all sense of direction. Before I am drawn too far into the maze, I pull over to assess my situation. Without the benefit of a GPS system to guide my way, I resign myself to the fact that good old-fashioned trial and error will be my only recourse. The persistent drone of the freeway tells me that the exit is close. Now all I have to do is find it. I am so caught up in contemplating the next move that I fail to see the stranger approach. The sound of the young man's voice breaks my concentration, and I react by jumping clear off my seat. "Are you lost?" As I struggle to regain my composure, I say, "My God, you scared me half to death." "Sorry about that, man, you just looked like you could use a little help." As he speaks, I get my first opportunity to assess the young man standing before me. Although I suspect his age to be no more than thirty, the prominent lines that run deep across his weathered face are reminiscent of a life hard-lived. He is tall and thin. His clothes hang loose upon his narrow frame. Despite his outward appearance, there is an easy look to him. His eyes reveal a kindness that immediately puts me at ease. "I guess I could use your help after all. Thank you. I just came off the freeway and was looking for a gas station and a bite to eat when somehow I managed to get myself into this mess."

He shakes his head before saying, "The road you are looking for is poorly marked. It is easy to see how you got confused. It's a good thing that this is a weekend. The rest of the week, this place is filled with hundreds of trucks and trailers. Do you have a pen and a piece of paper handy? I will be happy to get you back on your way." Retrieving my computer bag, I turn to a blank page in my notebook

and begin to write. When I am done, I repeat the directions back to him, and he nods. "You will pass right by a gas station and a number of restaurants on your way to the freeway ramp. You can't miss it." I thank him and begin to pull a few dollar bills out of my pocket. He puts his hand up to indicate that I should stop. "You can keep your money; I really don't have much use for it. Before I can comment, he points to my passenger seat. "If it's all right with you, I'll take that banana off your hands." Without hesitation, I say, "My pleasure, but why not take the cash as well?" He pauses before he answers. "The truth is, man, I'm not exactly popular with the local merchants around here. I'd likely be thrown out before I could even prove that I could pay. You see, sometimes I get so hungry that I am forced to steal to feed myself. I'm not proud of it, but I get desperate. If I show my face anywhere near one of those stores in broad daylight, they'll call the cops on me for sure." I feel for him, but I can think of nothing else that will help his situation. I thank him again and start my engine. True to his word, his directions are spot-on, and a number of restaurants begin to come into view. An hour later, I am filling my gas tank when I recognize a familiar image reflecting off my tinted window. A few minutes later, I am ordering at the drivethru speaker. Reversing my directions, I find him leaning under a shade tree. "Don't tell me you're still lost," he says. "No, not at all. I came back to give you something."

As he stares in disbelief, I hand him two bags. The first contains a quarter pounder meal, super-sized with two apple pies and a half dozen boxes of McDonald's cookies. The other bag contains an assortment of fresh fruits from the convenience store located next to the gas station. The look on his face tells me all I need to know. As he slowly examines the contents of both bags, I take the opportunity to say simply, "You're a good man, and you should never forget that. I wish you well, and I thank you again." He stares at my van as it slowly disappears down the road. A few minutes later, I am back on the freeway. I drive in silence, content in knowing that I have done the right thing. Life is full of choices. I learned a long time ago that if something feels right and is worth doing, then it's always worth

the effort. For me, Quadrant Leadership was worth every bit of effort I put into it. When I first set out to find a way to keep my company operating when I knew that I could not, I had no idea that it would evolve into something so remarkable. My only regret is not sharing it sooner. If you asked me if I would ever return to a traditional way of leading a group of people, my answer would be a resounding no. There is no doubt in my mind that the pure satisfaction derived from Quadrant Leadership would make it a simple choice for me. The model does not specifically address succession planning, but I think it is safe to say that you will never run short of future leaders eager for an opportunity to run your company. Their leadership style cannot help but reflect yours. After all, their whole development has been about acquiring knowledge in order to lead the way. I can't think of a more qualified candidate than that.

The year 2001 was difficult for me. I gained over seventy pounds and was beginning to spend long periods away from my business. In my mind, I was losing the battle. It was time to make my health my number one priority. That fall, I made things official by putting my company up for sale. It was an extremely difficult decision to make, but in my heart, I knew it was the right thing to do. Two extraordinary things happened that year that speak to the power of Quadrant Leadership and its incredible sustainability. As I have just stated, I was now missing a great deal of work, and my personal contribution to my own company was the least it had ever been. It was during this time that the McDonald's corporation decided to introduce a silent shopper program to rate all of the restaurants from a customer's perspective. McDonald's has always done internal critiques, but this marked the first time that we would be assessed based solely on customer feedback. Every operator across Western Canada would have their restaurants visited several times by these secret shoppers. They would measure the same QSC that Ray Kroc believed was the most important part of the McDonald's success story. Outstanding restaurant operations would be the criteria. When the program ended and the results were tallied, two of my restaurants scored in the top ten of the more than three hundred operator restaurants that participated in the program. One of my

restaurants was in the top three. To have one location in the top ten would have been an outstanding achievement, but to have two was truly remarkable. Clearly, the strength of the Quadrant Leadership Model carried the day. I was so proud of my people. Even when I could not be there for them, they were there for me in a big way. The other amazing achievement relates specifically to my employees themselves. It's traditional that operators give out one scholarship each year to a deserving employee who will be continuing their education. In 2001, I decided that I would not put a limit on the number of scholarships that could be awarded. I made it known that any graduate was eligible to earn a scholarship. The criteria to qualify were set very high. They involved a combination of maintaining excellent grades while making a significant contribution to the company. I set aside funding for five scholarships at the beginning of the school year.

When it came time to assess who had qualified, the numbers were truly impressive. Come ceremony time, I would be awarding an unprecedented eleven scholarships. At one of the two local high schools that my employees attended, I was given my own section of the awards program to recognize eight remarkable students. Each of the winners was more than deserving, and every one of them had clearly shown what they were truly capable of. On July 18, 2002, I said goodbye to my people and my company for the last time. In my heart, I knew I would never return. In 1997, I relocated to the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island. In a small town, you forge some close business relationships, and I had a good one with the local radio station. They were kind enough to invite me on air so that I could thank my many customers and, of course, my wonderful staff for their incredible contribution to my company over the years. It was a fitting conclusion to a thirty-two-year journey.

Being bipolar is a reality in my life, and unlike some people who are fortunate enough to have periods of remission, mine is a constant companion. There is no doubt that I will continue to have good and bad days, but I know for certain that I will never let it define who I am as a person. This book marks the first time I have ever written the words bipolar disorder. I have stood steadfast in my belief that I will not give it voice, or even acknowledge its existence. It is my way

of taking away any power it might have over me. I have never used it as an excuse, and I never will. There is a photo that sits on my windowsill. It is a picture taken of my sons when they were little boys atop Whistler Mountain. My oldest son has his arm wrapped around his younger brother, a symbol of the extraordinary bond that exists between these two incredible young men, even to this day. Over the years, whenever I found myself faced with the worst that my illness could throw at me, I would hold that picture close to my chest. It would remind me that I have so much to be grateful for, and it would give me the courage and the strength to carry on. These days there is another picture that shares a place of honour on the same windowsill. It is of two adorable little girls who just happen to be my beautiful granddaughters. These precious little angels are my new inspiration. When I think of them, it makes me smile. Simply knowing they breathe and walk this earth lifts me high above the darkest clouds, and once again, I walk in sunlight.