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I am Jim Natichioni of RightLivelihood.com and I have written the inspirational book: **Finding Your Path, Tales of Right Livelihood**. This excerpt is from Chapter Five: “The Transition into Right Livelihood” and relates to doing what it takes to follow a path of ‘right livelihood’. To read more please visit RightLivelihood.com.

Finding your path and right livelihood: The exemplars in this chapter have taken risks and sacrifices to commit to the cause of their choice. Like these warriors, any individual acting out his conscience can be a powerful force. What are you willing to risk: your job security, scorn, life and limb, monetary losses? When your right livelihood is something you believe in and enjoy working on you will endure the peaks and valleys; if it is laborious when the going gets tough you may not stick it out. Happiness is knowing that you are headed in the right direction. Some people know what they want to do but do not know how to get there. Be prepared to do what it takes to finance your dream. For instance you may chose to quit an unsuitable occupation and to start at the bottom of your chosen field and work your way up. Or chose between your right work being a full time enterprise augmented by supplemental income or a part time avocation supplemented by a full time job. There comes a time when you will have to stop waffling and commit to a path because sending conflicting messages leads nowhere. It’s later than you think, there’s no time to waste.

Being negative is heading the wrong way:

For example, at fifty years of age, I was still mired in a JOB I did not like but suffered in order to pay the bills. After thirty-something years of this pattern, my outlook was akin to that of Marlon Brando in the movie “On The Waterfront,” when he utters his famous line: “You don’t understand, I coulda had class, I coulda been a contenda, I coulda been someone. Instead of a bum, which is what I am.” Finally, I decided I had to honor who I was and, for a change, made a move in the right direction. Instead of cursing my property management job, I blessed it, and then cut my hours in half. I began selling real estate part-time, and in my spare time, took small steps toward my goal. I continued to explore ‘right livelihood’ and began writing this book with an inconceivable zeal.

The ragpicker: Your weakness may be your strength.

“The Secret” according to author Rhonda Byrne is in the iron law of attraction. Thinking and speaking conflicting messages ‘attract back’ disharmony. We have the power to create what we truly want in our work or health or relationships by seeing ourselves as the person we wish to be. My confidence in my ability to do anything my mind is set on has soared, and I am happier with my direction than ever before. Through the law of attraction, what I have struggled mightily with, what I have focused on for so long, my ‘right livelihood’, has become my greatest strength.

For a long while now I have had inkling suspicion that helping people find and live their destiny would be work I enjoyed. What a strange and wonderful world we live in, and the wonders we call serendipity, paradox, synchronicity, and yes miracles, make it so. In Og Mandinos, The Greatest Miracle, Simon is a 'Rag Picker' who salvages people instead of junk. Like Mother Theresa he seeks out those who have been discarded and become lost. Realizing that misfits too have potential, Simon tries to make a difference in their lives by giving them a "new sense of hope and direction," which to Simon is, "the Greatest Miracle in the World." He had "little sympathy for those who blamed their plight on misfortune or handicap." After all, Simon points out, Milton was blind, Beethoven deaf, Roosevelt crippled, Lincoln both poor and depressed, Helen Keller deaf and blind, Ulysses S. Grant an alcoholic, Ben Franklin and Einstein school dropouts. Simon believed that no one had a defect that was not a potential benefit in disguise.

Winston Churchill: Early on, Churchill decided he wanted to prepare for public life. He was a political unknown. He stumped for a job with an English paper to write from the troubled areas of the world. Soon, his vivid on-the-scene accounts attracted a huge following. He then ran for various political offices but was not embraced by the public. Churchill was defeated more often than not, but each time he lost he behaved so graciously that his opponents had to check the results again to make sure who the victor had been. At first he was not a very good politician but he continued to see the campaign as a field of battle on which he was destined to win. He persisted in running for office and believing in himself. Churchill had a sense of destiny and, as a result, his internal fortitude sustained him despite the reality of defeat.

Janet takes a job as a janitor to further her music ministry:

Some people know what they want to do and become, but do not know how to get there. Certainly if they had the luxury of a million dollars in the bank and could take their sweet time, they would have a better chance of figuring it out. But most of us do not have that luxury, and we must start *somewhere*. My wife Christina spent several years working out in Kansas City at Unity Village. One day Chris, who was at her desk working in the media department, was approached by a lady named Janet Manning, who inquired about the Unity job market in general and, more specifically, if there were any positions open in music. After drifting about the grounds for a few weeks, Janet's aspirations adjusted. She asked the personnel department "Do you have a job, any job? I love it here but I need to pay the bills."

Her heart felt at home in the spiritual community, so rather than work in Kansas City furthering her music career, she took the only position Unity had available at the time: that of a janitor, or as they called it in the movie "No Time for Sergeants," 'permanent latrine orderly.' "Okay, where do I start?" she asked, with enthusiasm. As it happened, Janet had more spare time than in her previous jobs and found the 'atmosphere' conducive to writing songs. But performing her perfunctory duties at the perfumery became odorous, and she contemplated leaving her lavatory-ministry and taking a job as a music teacher in Kansas City. Wisely, she decided to stick with it. Eventually Janet 'the janitor' became Janet 'the music director' of Unity Village and went on to write some of the most classic and enduring Unity standards.

Doing what it takes to make enough money to chase your dream:

When doing what you love does not pay the bills, you may have to choose between a gratifying vocation augmented by a part time job, or a gratifying avocation augmented by making the most money your talents will allow. Allow yourself flexibility. Those who dismiss the buttoned-up stiff-collared corporate world for flexibility and spontaneity have taken a huge step in the right direction.

The Choice, by Og Mandino, is partly autobiographical in its telling of an upwardly mobile, successful insurance vice-president named Mark Christopher, from my hometown of Framingham, Mass., who quits the drudgery of a path with no heart to pursue his dream of being an ‘inspirational’ author and to spend more time with his family.

In 1976, at the age of fifty two, Og Mandino himself shocked the publishing industry by resigning his presidency of “Success Unlimited” magazine to devote his time to writing and lecturing. Mandino became one of the most sought after motivational speakers and writers of his day. It comes as no surprise that in The Choice, he chose writing as the profession that glorifies man’s exodus from the daily grind of the JOB to the ‘promised land.’

In The Choice, despite his diligence one publisher after the next rejects Mr. Christopher’s manuscript. When he nearly runs out of money, he faces foreclosure on the perfect lighthouse-home his family has recently purchased. In order to make ends meet, this former wealthy executive takes a job pumping gas. His choice then was to say, “to hell with it” and stick with what he loved. Like our friend Janet, he took a menial job to keep from going broke.

How embarrassed Mark was when one of his past underlings pulls up to the pumps, looks at him pitifully and asks something to the effect: “Is this what you are doing with yourself?” followed by, “have you heard, the owners still want you back?” But the author believes in the inspirational value of his story. Rather than go back to his old job, he continues to work as a gas jockey pumping enough petrol to survive his new, more enriching lifestyle. Eventually his work gets published and reaches the best-seller list.

The implications of this fictional story are real. Most people at one time or another in their working lives face a similar conundrum: should I stay or should I go? Then, when they start their dream career and funds run low: should I do whatever it takes to advance, or should I retreat? Mouse, Paul, Janet and Og all faced the life-changing choices of what direction to take on their paths, when to stay in a job or when to leave, and whether they should follow their hearts or their pocketbooks. Making a decision, right or wrong, will serve you better than waffling. The decision to follow your pocketbook is explored in the next chapter.

Quotes and Works Cited: Chapter Five: He had “little sympathy for those who blamed their plight on misfortune or handicap.” (Mandino, Og: The Greatest Miracle in the World)