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Mom Knows Best: Embrace Change & Thrive

BY BUD BILANICH

THE 2008 HOLIDAY SEASON WAS A LITTLE ROUGH FOR ME. MY MOTHER who suffers from severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) twice had emergency intestinal surgery. This was on top of the heart attack she suffered last May.

It appeared as if we were going to lose her on New Year's Eve. Her priest even administered last rites. Somehow she pulled through and faces a couple of months of rehab before she'll be able to go home. But for now at least, she is still with us.

A Working Life

Henrietta (Hendrika-it sounds better in her native Polish) Dworkowski Bilanich was born in February 1926; that makes her 83 this month. She has seen good times and bad. She lived through the Great Depression and graduated from high school in 1943 at the height of World War II. She worked in the office of a ship building company after high school.

She married Lee Bilanich, my father, in 1946. I was born in 1950, my sister Betty in 1954. In 1956, my Mom went back to work-not typical in those days. She and my dad saved all their money she made so Betty and I could be the first in our family to go to college. She worked as a checker in a supermarket and as an Office Manager for Kmart. She ended her career with Kmart traveling the country setting up new stores. After she retired, she became an H&R Block tax consultant. I get my work ethic from her.

I also get a lot of my natural inquisitiveness from my Mom. She spends a lot of time on the Internet; especially on medical sites. She is an active partner with her physicians in managing her health problems.

On several occasions, she has expressed a desire to become an Internet marketer. This fall, she and I discussed writing an eBook highlighting what she has learned in life. Our plan is to sell it on ClickBank.

We got started on the eBook project, but decided to put it on hold for the holidays. Even with her recent health setbacks, we're planning on getting back to it after her rehab. However, I think she makes some great common sense points about how to live a happy and fulfilling-not to mention-successful life.

Life Lessons

Since February is my Mom's birthday month, I've decided to share the key points she will make in her forthcoming eBook. Here's what Henrietta Bilanich says she has learned about life in her 83 years:

- Make Faith, Hope and Love your priority.
- Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

- First impressions are not always the best.
- Be ready to accept change, good or bad.
- Never spread a rumor. Once you do you can't call it back.
- Always live by the Golden Rule.

Like most common sense, at first you might be tempted to write off these six suggestions as platitudes. However, if you spend some time thinking about them, you'll see that there is a lot of wisdom in them.

I particularly like what my Mom says about change. These are tumultuous times-especially in the pharmaceutical industry. The blockbuster model has died a lingering death. Pipelines are drying up. Price pressure continues-from both the public and insurance companies.

Retailers like WalMart are offering generic prescriptions for \$4 a month and \$10 for three months. The industry is searching for new and different ways to grow and thrive. Change is upon us.

As my Mom says, if you want to thrive in this environment, you need to "accept change, good or bad." I think that you need to not only accept change, you need to embrace it. We all do. Stuff happens: good stuff, bad stuff, frustrating stuff, unexpected stuff. And I believe we can all agree that a lot of difficult stuff has happened in this industry recently.

Making Choices

The common sense point here has a little to do with what is happening in the pharma industry right now and everything to do with free will. Successful people respond to stuff that happens in a positive way. Human beings are the only animals with free will. That means we-you and me-get to decide how we react to every situation that comes up.

As you go through life, stuff will happen, most of it out of your control. The important thing is how you react to the stuff that happens to you-the nice things, the mild annoyances and the major catastrophes. It's your choice. Successful people choose to respond to events proactively. They do what they can to make the best out of any situation in which they find themselves. That's what my Mom has to say about change, and I agree with her. ○

“The mother's heart is the child's school-room.”

Henry Ward Beecher

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