



The Exhortation

The Free Filling Station to reFuel your Encouragement Tank

Equipping. Enriching. Empowering. Encouraging. Energizing . . . Exhorting People to Greatness

July 2006

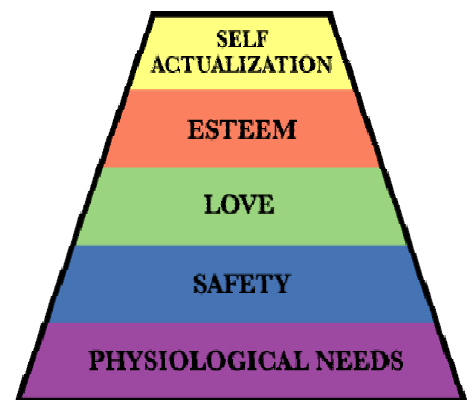
The FIFTH Element!

“There is no rational formula for greatness, for greatness is not rational. On some mysterious level, despite whatever resistance they felt, the great are those who simply said yes at times when others would have said no. Fear did not deter them so much as it honed them. Something called to them from a higher place, and they responded”.

– Marianne Williamson (In her book, “Everyday Grace”)

Inasmuch as some people may be quick to respond to issues that require their effort, time and money, our natural tendency as humans is to remain silent and sooth ourselves with the belief that there are enough able and willing people in the world to make a difference without us. But our silence, especially when it is against our innermost urge to act, is often more lethal than the actions of the actual perpetrators of evil. According to Bruno Jasienski, “Do not fear your enemies. The worst they can do is to kill you. Do not fear friends. At worst, they may betray you. Fear those who do not care; they neither kill nor betray, but betrayer and murder exist because of their silent consent.” This is why the focus of The Exhortation this month is to exhort you to examine your level of responsiveness to, firstly, your innermost desire to grow and better yourself; secondly, the needs of those around you; and ultimately, the desires of our Maker.

Using the popular Abraham Maslow’s five hierarchies of needs as a framework, we are no doubt quick to respond to our physiological/biological needs, safety/security needs, love/belonging needs, and status/esteem needs. However, many of us barely respond to The FIFTH Element, which is our need for self-actualization – a term coined by Kurt Goldstein, meaning **the instinctual need of humans to make the most of their unique abilities and to strive to be the best they can be**. According to Maslow, self-actualizing people embraces the facts and realities of the world rather than denying or avoiding them; they are creative and spontaneous in their ideas and actions, and interested in solving problems, especially the problems of others – often a key focus in their lives; they feel closeness to other people, and generally appreciate life; they have a system of morality that is fully internalized and independent of external authority; and finally, they judge others objectively without prejudice.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Furthermore, in a 1949 Psychological Review, self-actualization was defined as “the intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism, or more accurately, of what the organism is”. Basically, we are designed to continuously strive to be the best we can be, rather than settle for mediocrity, so that when we finally reach the end of our journey on earth, we can confidently say, like Apostle Paul once said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith”. According to an old Indian saying, “When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your

life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice". Pericles also noted **"What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others."**



My friend, this is The FIFTH Element - self-actualization! And your irresponsiveness to this innermost urge within you has caused many lives to be filled with regrets, guilty conscience and unhappiness, while causing many more to just sit by, complain, make excuses and blame others, instead of aspiring to fill the many vacancies for heroes and heroines in today's world. You and I know that major catastrophes in history, like the hauling of Africans from their continent to be sold into slavery in Europe and America; the first and second world wars; and the massacre of the Jews, as well as the ethnic cleansing in Rwanda that collectively resulted in a sum of over two million deaths was fuelled by the silence of people, institutions and governments who could have made a difference, but chose otherwise. Similarly, today's global chaos, with the worst being the millions of death caused by starvation, and the enslavement, exploitation, pornography and prostitution of children, rages on because some of us have chosen to remain silent. If you

barely obey your own innermost urges to better yourself, improve your relationships with others, and contribute towards making the world a better place, the result in no different. **According to Edmund Burke, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing". "In the end", Martin Luther King, Jr. added, "We will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."** My friend, there are three categories of humans: Those who make things happen; those who watch things happen; and those that wonder what happened. Which category do you belong to?

As a Personal Effectiveness Coach, I have the opportunity of working with a diverse group of people to enhance their personal effectiveness, marriages, parenting, careers, businesses, finances and spirituality; and it remains evident that in most cases, they know exactly what to do in order to conquer their obstacles. But like many of us, they often remain silent to even their innermost urge to make things happen. Smokers, for example, and others with unhealthy and detrimental habits often have consistent urges within themselves to quit these habits, but yet never initiate or continue the process. They agree to the infertility, and even dangers of these habits, but yet really do nothing about eliminating them. Despite their innermost urges, some of them still put up strong oppositions when being lovingly urged by others to quit these bad habits.

So, what is your innermost being requesting of you today? Apostle Paul indicated ages ago that the acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. What is yours? Is it smoking, eating too much (of unhealthy meals), consuming too much alcohol, procrastinating, selfishness, tardiness, laziness, inconsideration, harshness, favouritism, dishonesty, lies, pride, fraud, fornication, pornography, lust, and the like? In a world where it has become convenient to be silent to our own innermost urge to act, thus creating a shortage of present day heroes and heroines, many have become complacent even in what matters most to them. We have urges to take the necessary steps to enhance ourselves, mend a broken relationship, maintain bliss in our marriage,



spend quality time with our children and families, and grow in our spirituality, but yet do nothing at all with the hope to somehow not have a broken marriage, a pregnant teenage daughter, or a soon-to-be-dad teenage son. How are you responding to that drive within you to advance your career, grow your business, or be more disciplined in your finances, eating habits, and spirituality? **A good gauge of your responsiveness is reflected in the number of people that really look up to you in these areas. As William Jennings Bryan said, "Destiny is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved".**

If we listen to our innermost self, honestly, we would hear ourselves telling us how to practically enhance our personality and make a difference in the lives of those around us, and the world in general. Without a mirror, and even when we choose to ignore feedback from those around us, we can clearly identify those detrimental, growth-detracting habits and character traits that our innermost self is urging us to eliminate in order to grow and become the best that we can be. So just like we are quick to respond to the first four of Maslow's hierarchies of needs, we should be determined to respond to The FIFTH Element, which is self-actualization. While always maintaining a strong thirst for wisdom, understanding and knowledge, we should humbly seek and accept feedback from those around us, especially our spouse, children, families, friends and coworkers, and then be quick to implement those feedback that will obviously make us grow. In Maslow's words, **"If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life".**



In her book, *Everyday Grace*, Marianne Williamson said, "It was not easy for Abraham Lincoln to be the Abraham Lincoln we revere today; it was not easy to be Susan B. Anthony, or Mahatma Ghandi, or Martin Luther King, Jr. They were born, as all of us are, with potential greatness. But the actualization of that greatness was not predetermined. They could have decided to do and be otherwise. Whatever spiritual force moved within their hearts, luring them toward a magnificent destiny, is a lure that exist in all of us. **There is no rational formula for greatness, for greatness is not rational. On some mysterious level, despite whatever resistance they felt, the great are those who simply said yes at times when others would have said no.** Fear did not

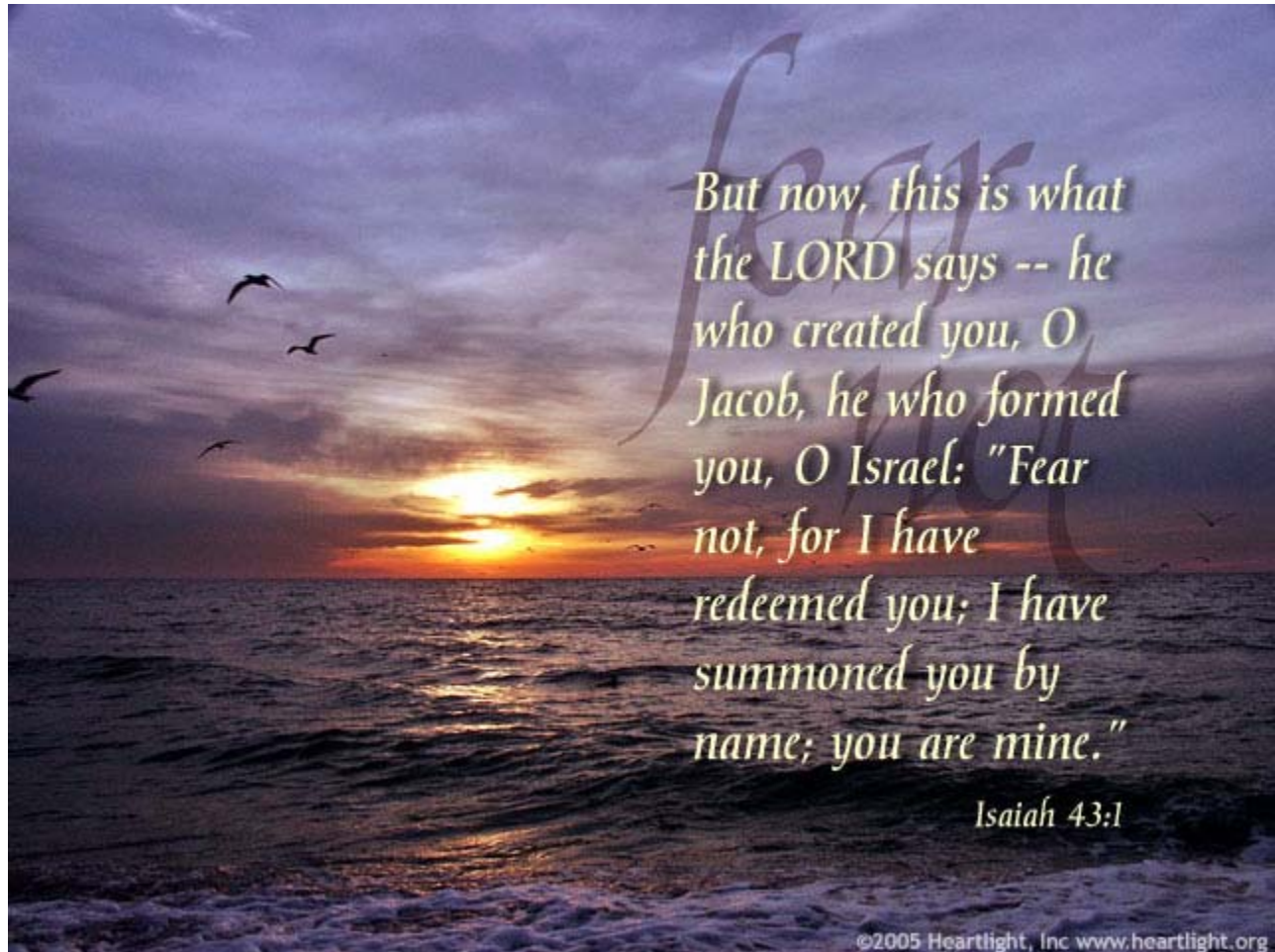
deter them so much as it honed them. Something called to them from a higher place, and they responded". According to Jeannette Coto, "The purpose of life is to matter, to be productive, to have it make a difference that you lived at all." And to make this happen, my friend, you have to be responsive to yourself and to the people and events around you.

Therefore, I exhort you to employ your strengths and talents in order to enhance yourself and enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. Make the necessary effort to control your weaknesses, rather than letting your weaknesses control you. Pursue and use valuable information to enhance your effectiveness in every area of your life, while objectively measuring your progress as you go. Make every effort to promptly respond to the invitations, messages, voicemails and emails of those who took the time to reach out to you. And like Jesus Christ did when he offered to pay Zacchaeus a visit without being asked because he perceived a need, **seize opportunities to meet the unexpressed needs of those around you. Instead of remaining silent, rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn, for our living is determined, not so much by what life bring**



to us as by the attitude we bring to life; not so much by what happens to us as by our reaction to what happens. In the words of Goethe, "The things that matter the most must never be at the mercy of the things that matter the least".

Shalom, my friend; and as you embark on your new or renewed quest for self-actualization, I pray that He who made you remain your guide. May He help you humbly accept the changes necessary to enhance your personality, and also bless you as you respond to your innermost urges to obey Him, better yourself and influence those around you. Amen.



Alex Nosa Ihama is a Freelance Writer, Motivational Speaker and a Consultant and Coach in Business, Leadership and Personal Effectiveness who **dispenses encouragement worldwide** through his website, www.TheExhortation.com, motivational speeches and articles, and Personal Effectiveness workshops and events. Together with his Running Wife, Stephanie, a Fitness Coach who currently train and motivate marathoners and long distance runners, they founded **The Exhortation World Outreach**.

Alex developed the Personality Dashboard®, which is a tool used to accurately discover and measure personality strengths and opportunities, and provides physical and remote one-on-one coaching sessions to a diverse group of people around the world, in order to enhance their personal effectiveness, marriage, parenting, relationships, career, businesses, finances and spirituality. He also facilitates quarterly Marriage Enrichment Forums, the annual Mighty Men Convention, and other events aimed at EQUIPPING, ENRICHING, EMPOWERING, ENCOURAGING, ENERGIZING and EXHORTING people to GREATNESS.

For more information about Alex and Stephanie, **The Exhortation World Outreach**, or to start receiving your *free* REGULAR dose of ENCOURAGEMENT, as well as BENEFIT from our ENRICHING and ENERGIZING Programs, Resources, Newsletters and EVER-GROWING knowledgebase, REGISTER now by sending an email directly to alex.ihama@TheExhortation.com.

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