

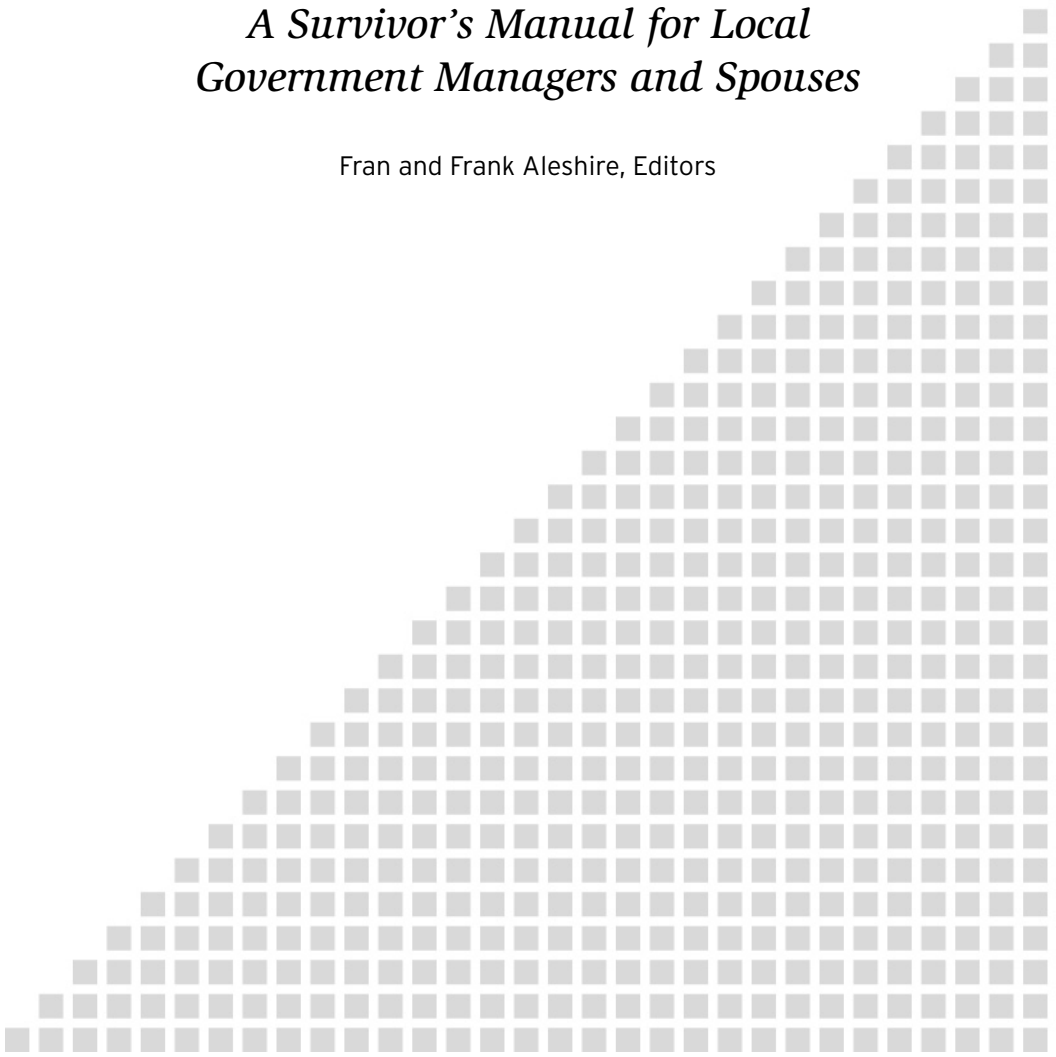


Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

Notes for Beachcombers

*A Survivor's Manual for Local
Government Managers and Spouses*

Fran and Frank Aleshire, Editors



Notes
for
Beachcombers
A Survivor's Manual
for Local Government
Managers and Spouses

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With contributions from: Dana A. Miller, Josh Mott, Paul J. Pitt, Ivan L. Widom, Thomas M. Butch, Tim Maupin, Gerald Tuzinowski, Mark Wollenweber.

The Importance of Reaching Out

The following remarks were given by Mark E. Keane, Executive Director of ICMA, at the ICMA Annual Conference in Anaheim, 1981.

The prosperity of ICMA has allowed me in recent months to survey our professional landscape with more intensity. What I have discovered as I look around more broadly and deeply is that more and more of our colleagues are suffering—suffering severe distress—and not just from all the headaches of the management job today. They are in pain from separations, divorce, problems with children, alcohol—the very same human problems that hit all people in our society.

A manager in distress often becomes invisible. No one calls or writes. No one says a thing about your being fired or separated from your spouse when they meet you at a state managers' meeting. It's just hail fellow, well met; a slap on the back; a lame joke; and "Let's have lunch sometime." It is as if the distressed manager did not exist. It is as if he or she were invisible.

We are subject to the irrational but instinctive fear that someone else's misfortune will be visited on us if we get too close. We fear the intimate emotional contact inherent in reaching out to someone in deep trouble. Tears are painful to watch. We stand by helpless, foolish, angry.

But we are learning to control the fear of reaching out. We are learning that reaching out to colleagues in distress is helpful, that they are frequently reassured and strengthened when we acknowledge their problems, listen to the circumstances, and offer our own observations.

It may be that the change was signaled with Larry Gish's presidential address two years ago, when he urged us to acknowledge our own humanity, an urging that caused a groundswell of support, an urging that would have seemed inappropriate somehow for an ICMA leader not too many years ago.

The embarrassing thing, however, is when we have no idea someone is in trouble—when we hear about the firing, or divorce, or manager-plan referendum after the fact. We think, “Why didn’t someone tell me?”

The answer, of course, is that people in trouble are least able to reach out. It is very hard to say, even in the most indirect way, “Please listen,” or “Please help.” We almost never do. We sit and wonder why no one calls.

We sometimes assume that everyone knows that we are in trouble. The roar of local disapproval seems so loud it must reverberate everywhere. Right? Wrong. Local or personal news travels slowly, if at all. It travels slowly even in a large city with a very active press. So those of us who hear about a manager in trouble have a responsibility to let our colleagues know as quickly and yet as discreetly as possible. It’s not easy, but it’s very important to pick up the phone and say, “Did you know that John is about to be fired?”

The perfect communication network for this information has not yet been developed.* So it is hit or miss. But we are discovering our invisible colleagues; we are picking up the phone and asking, “How’s it going? Is there something I can do to help?” We even have discovered, with surprise, that we can reach out successfully to colleagues we do not know, or know only casually.

If there is something in writing, like ICMA’s handbook on how to deal with abandonment referenda, we send it to them. If a spouse-to-spouse chat would be helpful, each of us could arrange for that. If one of the ICMA Range Riders—our retired force of part-time counselors—can help, we can let them know.

We can all make sure that our colleagues lose their invisibility in times of stress. We can let someone know that a colleague is in trouble. And then we can reach out the best we can.

We are doing this more and more. We are learning to see distress and offer assistance. We are learning that we can bridge the difficulties, that we are welcome in our efforts, and that we can be helpful. This is a marvelous trend in our profession. It is tangible evidence of our attention to our own humanity.

There is a Spanish quotation—a favorite of mine—that goes something like this:

*Since this speech, a column called “Managers in Transition” has been added to the ICMA Newsletter.

Amar no es nada.
Ser amado es algo.
Amar y ser amado es todo.

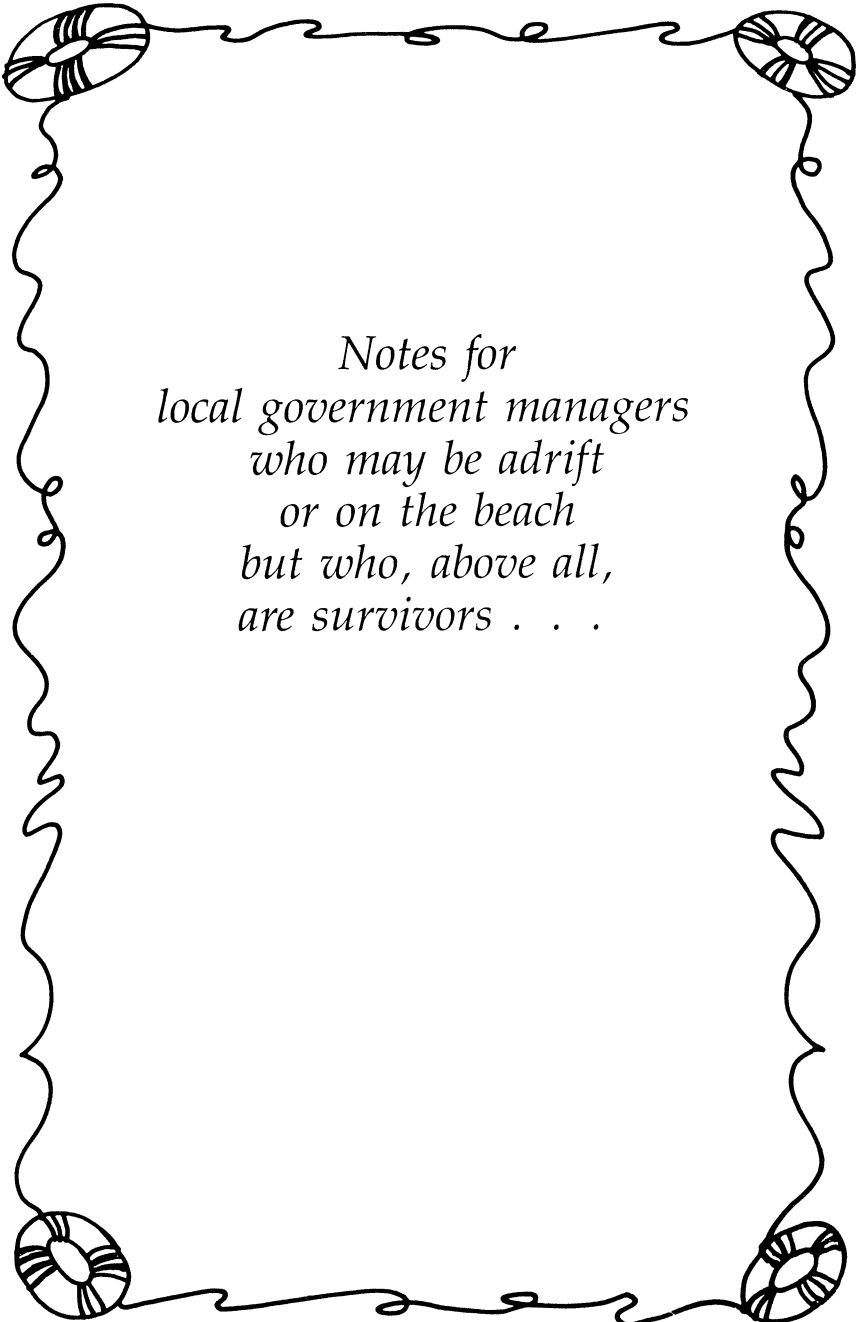
To love is nothing.
To be loved is something.
To love and be loved is everything.

I believe we are on this earth to love and be loved.

We have joined together in this association—ICMA—to devote special effort, with our colleagues in this profession, to loving and being loved by each other. We receive support and we give support. We receive counsel, advice, information—and we give it. It's a balanced equation. We receive and we give.

Yes, we are loved and we love. That may be the truly unique character of our profession. I think it is.

So keep your inner spirit vibrant and strong and beautiful. And remember: Amar y ser amado es todo—To love and be loved is everything.



*Notes for
local government managers
who may be adrift
or on the beach
but who, above all,
are survivors . . .*

On Beachcombing

Frank and Fran Aleshire
Carlsbad, California

You'll find that this book is all about personal experiences and that it is written in a very personal style. The book is especially for local government managers who are going through the intense experience of losing their jobs. We believe that people in this situation do not want abstract advice. What is wanted is authenticity—shared experiences from others who have lived what they have to say. The only thing you can give to others is what you are, and that is what the writers of this book offer to their readers.

As editors, we had to talk an uncomfortable amount about our own lives. We didn't find a way around that because one of our goals is to demonstrate how helpful it can be to open up and share experiences. We learn by both thinking and feeling, and perhaps we all need to discover more about why this is so.

We've added depth and balance by asking others to contribute their stories. The result is a rich field of experience for you to make of what you will. Here are glimpses, ideas, perceptions, and insights that have come to people who have made this perilous, but fruitful journey from ship to shore and back to shipboard again.

We did think of an analogy to describe the process. Being fired is like being cast adrift from a ship at sea. One minute you are captain of the ship, in full command, the sails filled with a spanking breeze. The sailors run about smartly, pulling and hauling lines, everyone very busy, and the ship making good headway toward the distant land. Then, suddenly, an uprising, an overturning erupts. You are pushed off in a small lifeboat, perhaps with only one faithful companion beside you or perhaps alone, with only a few provisions to tide you over.

Timorously you set sail for shore, and, thankfully, you soon

reach the beach. And there you are, on the beach, possibly for some months. What will you do? How will you provide for yourselves? Are there others on the beach with whom you might join forces? Are there useful activities with which you might occupy your time? Should you build a sturdier boat and set sail for some other place? Should you wait for another ship to call at your landfall so you can offer your services as an experienced captain? Should you plot to retake your lost ship? Maybe you should pray. Or should you really get into the joys of beachcombing and just let the world take care of itself?

So this is a book about sailing, about being cast adrift, about finding land, about beachcombing, and about setting sail again. This is how we managed the journey; this is how others managed; and, with or without the book, we have no doubt you shall manage as well or better. We just thought you could use some encouragement.

Pitons

Frank Aleshire

Life, especially after being fired, may be compared to rock climbing. Think of crawling up a sheer, rugged cliff, the Great White Throne at Zion National Park. There are few good footholds. You reach out and feel the crumbling rock for handholds. Each crack and crevice offers scanty and risky chances. Each slight move upward is fraught with danger. Your throat is dry. Fear of falling tightens your belly. Your breath is short and bitter. You groan, push, pull, slither, hunch upward—so slow, so hard.

Then, suddenly, another's hand is there offering you a piton—pounding it into the rock—giving you a steady foothold. You step cautiously upon it and move easily upward. You bless that hand. At such a moment, gratitude is too slight a word.

Then you find another piton, and another, helping, easing the climb, the breath, the fear.

That's the way it feels to get a helping hand—a phone call from a friend, an invitation to dinner, a letter, an article, a smile, a pat on the back. It's not any one thing that takes you to the top. It's a piton here and there.

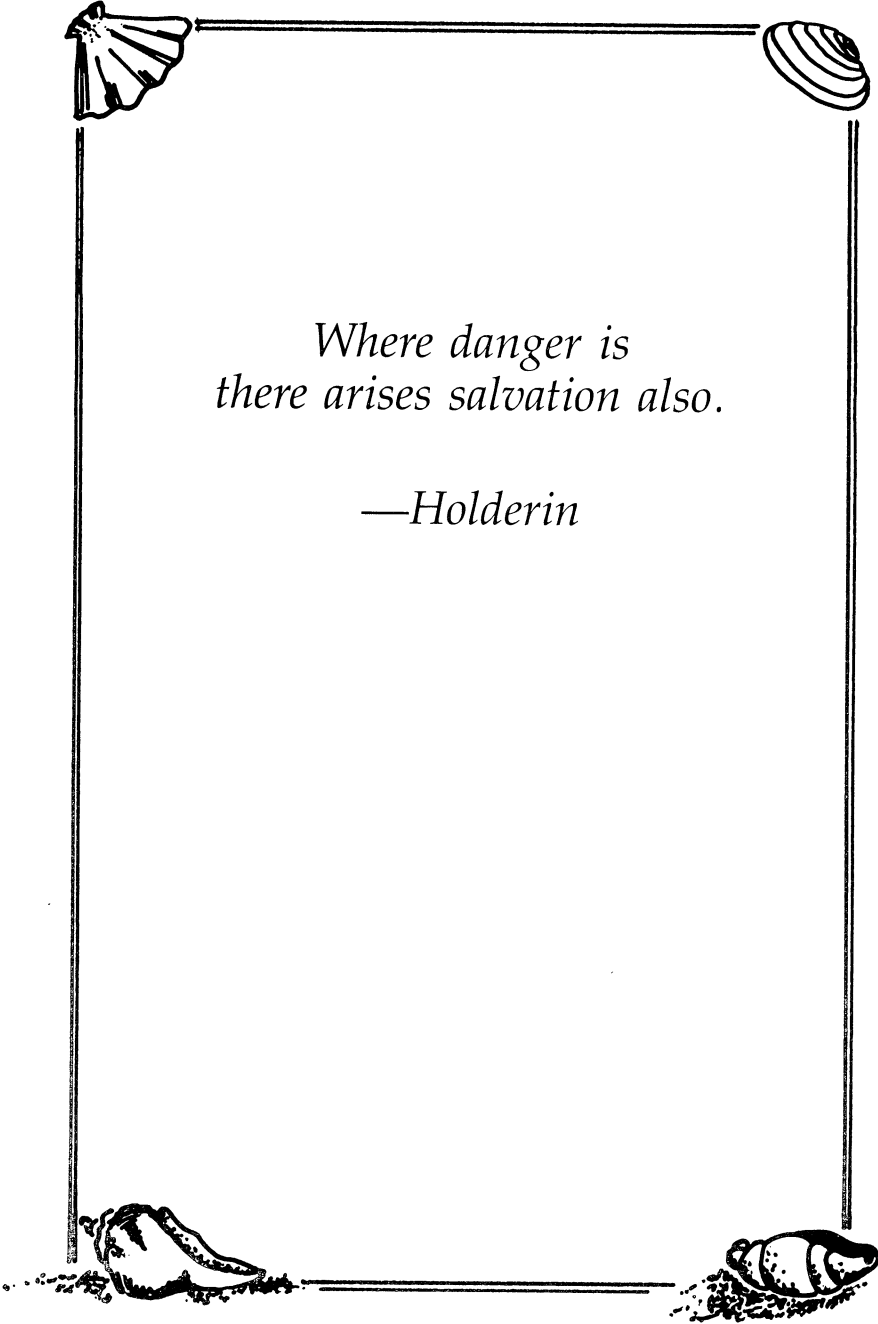
The Lesson of the Waves

How can one learn to live through the ebb-tides of one's existence? How can one learn to take the trough of the wave? It is easier to understand here on the beach, where the breathlessly still ebb-tides reveal another life below the level which mortals usually reach. In this crystalline moment of suspense, one has a sudden revelation of the secret kingdom at the bottom of the sea. Here in the shallow flats one finds, wading through warm ripples, great horse-conches pivoting on a leg; white sand dollars, marble medallions engraved in the mud; and myriads of bright-colored cohina-clams, glistening in the foam, their shells opening and shutting like butterflies' wings. So beautiful is the still hour of the sea's withdrawal, as beautiful as the sea's return, pressing to reach those dark rumpled chains of seaweed which mark the last high tide.

Perhaps this is the most important thing for me to take back from beach-living: simply the memory that each cycle of the tide is valid; each cycle of a relationship is valid. And my shells? I can sweep them all into my pocket. They are only there to remind me that the sea recedes and returns eternally.

*Ann Morrow Lindberg,
Gift of the Sea (109-110)*

Personal Accounts of Managers and Spouses On the Beach



*Where danger is
there arises salvation also.*

—Holderin

Unsought Passages

Frank Aleshire

There is no pattern to being fired. It happens at midnight or at high noon. It happens to the “old pros” and to the novices. It happens in big cities, in counties, and in small villages. There are all kinds of reasons given, but most of them make no sense.

I’ve decided it is a lot like a marriage. The relationship between a manager and the council is a very personal thing. In spite of all our talk about professionalism, it is the personal chemistry that makes it work. Sometimes you never really “fall in love.” Sometimes the magic wears away. When the break comes, it is impossible to figure out. Why did it happen? How could it have been prevented? Can it be patched up? All of the questions and rationalizations seem feeble and false in the face of the enormity of the *fait accompli*.

When it happened to me, I went through a five-phase series of reactions: shock, disbelief, blame, revenge, and acceptance.

Shock. I don’t believe what I am hearing. This can’t be happening. I am stunned. I can’t think. I feel trapped, paralyzed. Just let me get away from all the noise and chaos, so I can sort things out. This is like getting caught in a bombing attack—tremendous noise and confusion. The first reaction is to run away and hide.

Disbelief. When the hammering stops, a new thought takes hold. Wait a minute. There must be some mistake. You’ve got the wrong man. I haven’t done anything wrong. Let us sit down and reason together. Then you will realize what a mistake you are making. We can work this out. I’m willing to be fair.

But of course that doesn’t work. Even if we succeed in talking, that won’t solve the problem. The hounds already have been unleashed. Rationalization and recrimination can only reinforce the previous decision. It is like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Blame. The next phase sets in. Oh, woe is me! I have really screwed up this time. What went wrong? What did I do? It's all my fault. I knew it was coming, but I just didn't listen. I shouldn't have been so trusting. I should have been tougher. I should have been smarter, played politics, gone along. Yes, I'm to blame.

Revenge. The masochistic phase doesn't last long, although it tends to revive in glimpses and snatches for a long time. Soon after suffering the pain of self-criticism, a new emotion surges to life.

I have some rights. I won't let them get away with this. It isn't really my fault. I demand justice. I'll make them pay. Then begins an exciting act in this drama, an act that could be titled, "Dreams of Getting Even." You think about public hearings, exposing the culprits, a lawsuit, recall, running for election, a citizen uprising, or maybe even murder! Fight, not flight, that's the answer.

Acceptance. Alas, the mills of the gods grind slowly. Perhaps there will be justice but seldom in the short run. The die is cast.

Gradually, I came to see that life goes on. Each day provides a new opportunity to flee or fight, or to live and grow. We do have freedom to choose how we will react to what happens to us.

Slowly I began to accept what had happened, to work through my thoughts of shock, disbelief, blame, and revenge and to see this experience as another passage in my life. I did not know why it had come to me, but I resolved to focus on the next step. My experience was but another chapter with an unexpected ending. There were chapters before, and there will be chapters afterwards.

The Common Thread

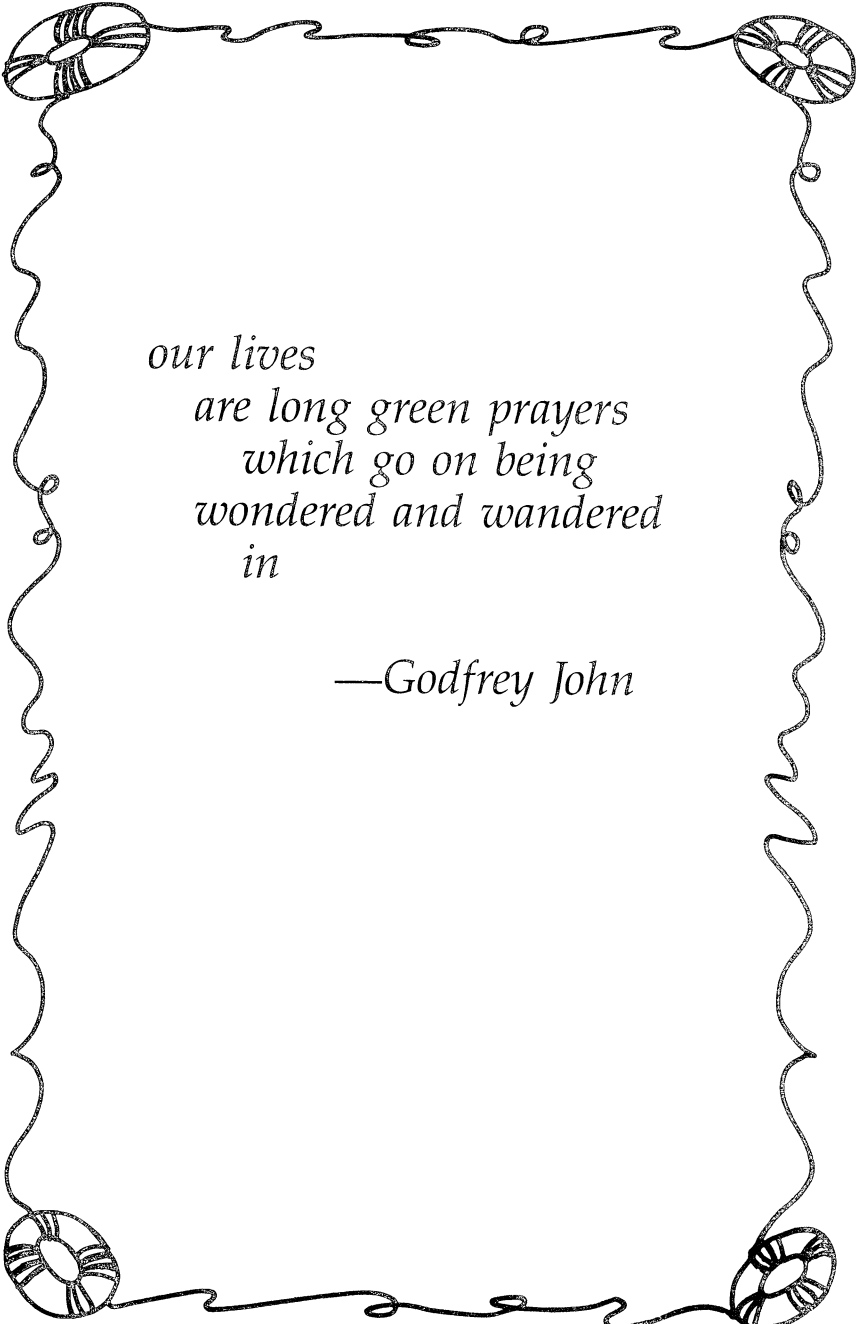
There is a common thread through all of the testimonies you will be reading in this section of *Beachcombers*. It is not the similarity of the events themselves or of the emotions and experiences of the people. It is the tempering and chastening that come to each person involved. The trouble is that you can't see that happening at the time. It takes time to move far enough away from the event so that it comes into focus.

Getting fired is not the only way to grow up. There are many other passages in life that cause suffering—divorce, loss of a loved one, business failure, illness, war, accident. These are not sought-after experiences. But each carries power within it for good as well as evil. From reading the lives of others, you can see how adversity

does build character and how suffering does forge meaning in individual lives.

I see now that my vision of life was too narrow. As the child watching the waves breaking on the beach cannot visualize the vastness of the ocean, and as a person gazing at the moon cannot fathom the infinity of outer space, so I cannot decipher the meaning of my life by interpreting a few events. Nor should I give one event undue weight.

What seems important to me now is that I get up and get going again, whatever the cost, and know that with each period of darkness there will come a little more light.



*our lives
are long green prayers
which go on being
wondered and wandered
in*

—Godfrey John

To the Mountains

Ted Tedesco
Boulder, Colorado

I am hopeful that my experience in San Jose can be helpful to those of you who read this. Any time a manager is relieved of the job, it is a crisis for both the manager and the family. In my case, it proved to be the best thing that could have happened to me and seemed to be timed just right both in my career and life.

First, you should consider my personal situation at the time of the firing. I was 48 years old, and felt that I had achieved a career goal of managing a city of 600,000. It was an exciting community, but after three or four years I was struck with how increasingly frustrating and routine many of the issues became. Weekly zoning hearings, lasting five and six hours, seemed endless. I went through three or four different budget format changes (program, objective, zero-based) and still never saw any difference in the outcome. Most of all, I became disenchanted with the quality of the elected officials. From my point of view, the level of ability seemed to drop at each election. I mention this not as a condemnation of local government, but to explain my general attitude at that point in my career.

All in all, I was ready for something to push me into considering a career change. In September 1978, the city council of San Jose, in a four-to-three vote, fired me. The four votes converged on a lingering dispute over growth policies and a hotly contested battle for mayor. While I was not surprised, I was struck with how quickly circumstances coalesced to bring about my demise. Turbulent days followed my firing, and 90 days later, all four of the council members who voted to fire me either had resigned or were defeated in the November election.

Circumstances aside, in November 1978, I found myself embarked on a new career as Vice Chancellor for Administration at the

University of Colorado at Boulder, and am “living happily ever after.”

Easy as it may sound, it still was no simple transition. After a firing, we all experience feelings of rejection, frustration, loss of prestige, and chagrin to one degree or another. These are normal feelings and should be expected. My attitude was critical during the entire time, and I set my mind to not allow myself to get down about the situation. Most important was the support I needed from my family and friends. Sometimes just a kind comment from my wife was all I needed to bolster my thoughts. That was the most important role she could have played during this transition, and she was great! I am sure she was just as concerned, but she never allowed the situation to get maudlin.

I realized how important it was to maintain my sense of humor throughout this period. Being a local government manager gives you a front row seat on some of the most comical things that can happen, and I’ve always enjoyed that feature of the job. I now realize how important it was for me to talk things over with colleagues, friends, and family members.

Having more personal time available (another way of looking at being out of work), I was able to catch up on tennis, reading, and chores. Frankly, after being employed for 21 years without interruption, I came to enjoy the feeling of not having to go to work.

Both my wife and I were somewhat surprised at how quickly we were dropped from the city-related social scene. That bothered us a bit, but we realized that not being a manager meant, realistically, that we would no longer be considered on the social lists, despite a former position.

I have no perfect pearls to offer to help you through these difficult times. Being fired has happened to others before and will continue to happen, even though you never think it can happen to you.

My only advice is to work hard to turn adversity into a positive thing. Take the old line, “Our city manager left the city as he entered—fired with enthusiasm!” and make it work for you. As a colleague of ours said, after he’d been fired and out of work for six months, “At least when you get up in the morning, you are already there!” Now that’s positive thinking!

Landfall

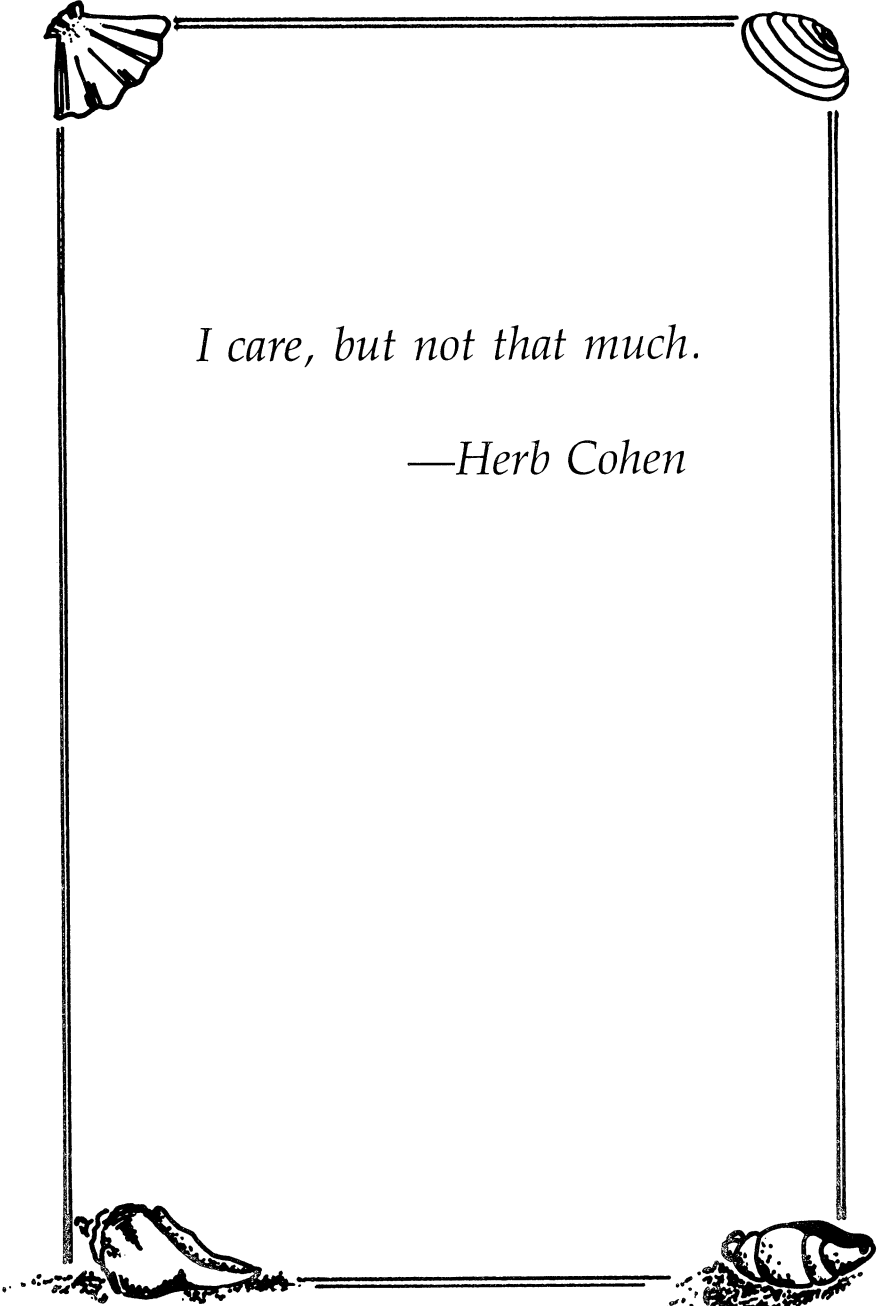
I have not sailed so far,
outridden the storms and perils of the deep,
to go aground upon some shingle bar,
to let some sand-shoal keep
my ship from harbor, suddenly to feel
the rending of my keel
on sharp invisible rock, to founder in the seas
in sight of welcoming quays.

All down the rugged coast
the language of the lights
through calm or angry nights
has shepherded me;
the white group flashes, precisely timed,
eclipse and occultation,
sections of red and green in alternation,
have cliff and foreland named;
or siren, diaphone, reed-horn, explosive,
have shouted through the fog with voice decisive.

Now gently speak the buoys,
the cone and can and sphere,
the cage and staff and spar,
beacon and pillar and bell,
checker or stripe or band
marks for the port or starboard hand,
the vertical or horizontal round
warning of middle ground.
If I have studied well,
if I have truly learnt
the discipline of the seas,
if I heed these,
up the clear channel my ship will move at ease
to tie up safely at the waiting quays.

Peter Henniker-Heaton
Jubilee and Other Poems

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I care, but not that much.

—*Herb Cohen*

Proper Perspective

James Thurmond
Uvalde, Texas

My coping technique for handling managerial crises is basically the inverse of a technique used by long distance runners to forget their pain. They recall pleasant memories in order to forget their running stress. My approach is to place the crisis in its proper perspective by comparing it to more difficult circumstances.

I do this by falling back on my Army experiences in Vietnam and relying upon the typical response of the infantryman in Vietnam: "It don't mean nuthin'."

Upon returning to base camp from combat operations, infantry soldiers frequently were jumped on by rear echelon NCOs or officers for some infraction of Army rules. After being shot at and living like animals during combat operations, the infantryman knew what the real meaning of life was—and it sure was not worrying about some NCO or officer gripe about unpolished boots or improper head gear. Whenever a soldier was in such a situation, he would respond, "Yes, Sergeant," or "Yes, sir," and then under his breath he would mumble to himself or to a fellow soldier, "It don't mean nuthin'."

It was the infantry soldier's way of coping with the unusually stressful situation of serving the Army on two levels: one in the field facing combat, and the other in the base camp, which was more secure but Army regulated. Such a statement meant that the soldier had looked at the stressful situation in the eye and had compared it with all the other items in his scheme of life and all his other problems. He then decided that this situation should not take away from his life. Why let a confrontation over unpolished boots upset you when you still have your life?

Recalling Vietnam experiences and comparing them to present

local government management career problems makes the present problems seem minimal. Also, as the infantry soldier knows, as long as you still have your life, you have everything.

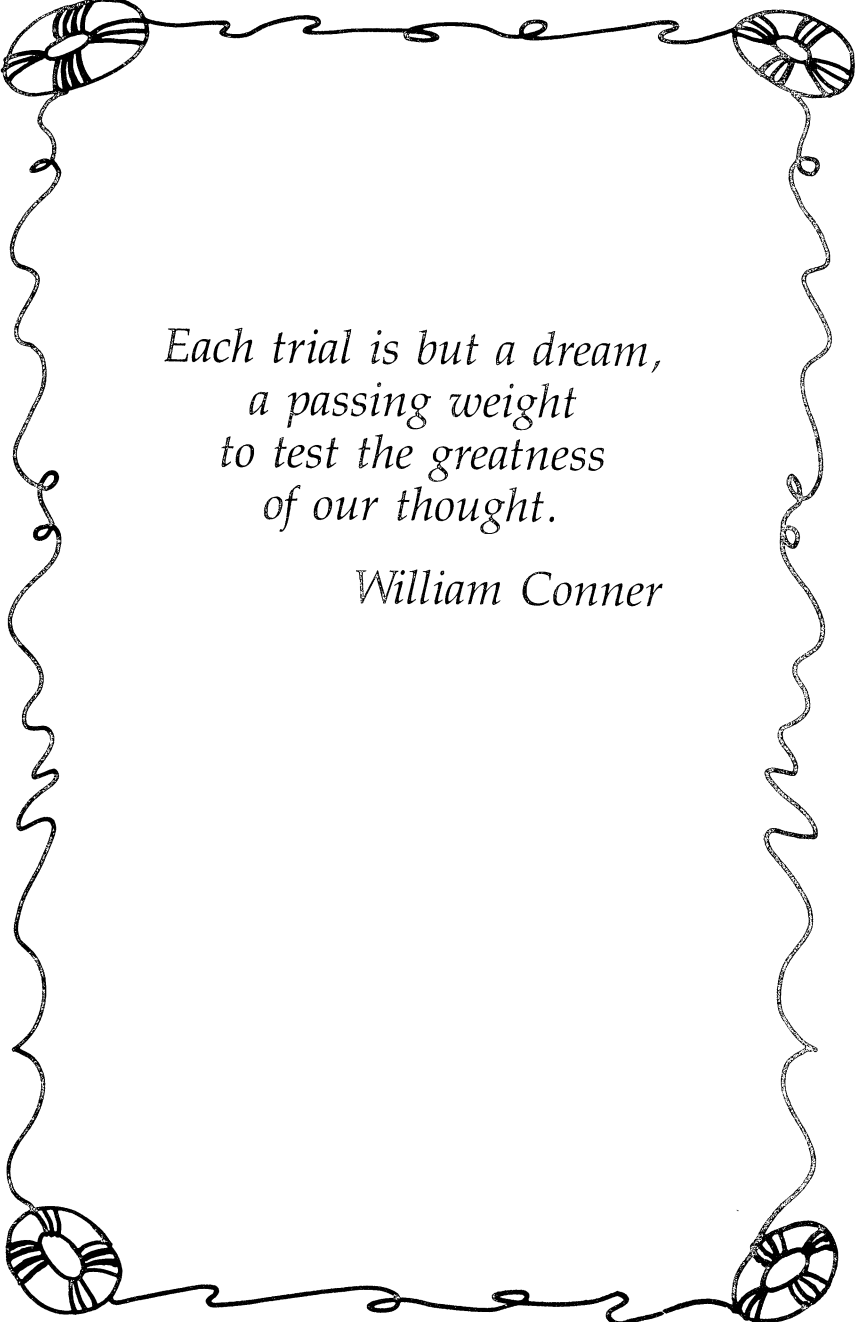
Once when the pressure really got to me in another city, I placed a picture of my Army buddies by my telephone so that my use of the “It don’t mean nuthin’ ” technique was made easier. I may have recalled a particular combat operation, some of my Army buddies, or the loneliness of being separated from my family. Whatever I recalled, it always made the present crisis seem less severe and relatively simple.

My technique may not seem very professional. All I know is that it works for me—along with my reliance upon my family, prayer, and physical exercise to cope with problems.

Companions

There are people on a parallel way: I do not see them often, or even think of them often, but it is precious to me that they are sharing the world. Something about how they have accepted their lives, or how the sunlight happens to them, helps me to hold the strange, enigmatic days in line for my own living.

William Stafford



*Each trial is but a dream,
a passing weight
to test the greatness
of our thought.*

William Conner

High Expectations

Sherry Suttles
Cleveland, Ohio

Oberlin, Ohio, was the beginning and the end, the commencement and the finale, or so it seemed. It was my first local manager's job, the culmination—as one described it—of a meteoric rise to stardom in a profession otherwise dominated by white males over 40. I was young and the first black female ever to serve as manager there. Oberlin is a town known for having the first black female college graduate back in the 1800s, and traditionally having an open door to those discriminated against by reason of race or sex. And yet, two stormy years after it began, it was all over, and I was among all the other millions of unemployed—dejected and lacking a goal or direction in which to turn next.

There had been other black, female managers, but all on temporary status. None had been trained in the profession; all served in predominantly black towns. These women could not be considered real role models in the battle to overcome a last bastion of male supremacy. Only I could fight that battle, only I could win it. Only I had the training, the exposure, the experience, the will. What burdensome expectations!

No sooner had I arrived than the honeymoon abruptly ended. The newspapers had played up my candidacy and appointment for months beforehand, so I already had great visibility. My first mistake was to have the newly hired public works director get some prices for improving the city-owned house I was to occupy. My second, third, and fourth mistakes took the form of various disputes with department heads, including the chief of police, who turned out to have more support than I had bargained on!

In the meantime, my second term on the ICMA board caused me to travel out of town more than usual, something my predecessor never had done, so that became a sore point.

Then it was felt that I moved too fast in obtaining federal monies, though that had been a clear mandate by the council that had hired me (by now there were three new councilmembers). Some \$2 million over a three-year period was garnered from Community Development Block Grant monies to restore homes, streets, and sewers in a predominantly black part of town.

Perhaps the *coup de grace* was a surplus of more than \$200,000 out of a \$7 million budget, discovered by the council-appointed auditor *after* an income tax increase measure lost in a November referendum. The council really had promoted the tax increase.

Things did not look good, but I expected to limp along until the next election six months away. The chair of the council even assured me that “nothing would happen.” I was shocked, surprised, and hurt when the council, after a series of executive sessions, presented me with a unanimous written request to resign.

I negotiated to remain three more months in office with an additional two months paid as a consultant. Frankly, I was relieved that it was over at last, though pained that I had not been able to stick it out for the three years I wanted under my belt. I felt a failure and wondered where I went wrong. Friends both within Oberlin and within the profession were encouraging, assuring me that the city was not as progressive as it professed to be and that I was just too much for them.

Nevertheless, when I looked over my entire career in the local government management profession, it seemed an appropriate time to step back, take a break, and try something else. My job search was long, exhilarating, and depressing all at the same time. I interviewed, literally, from coast to coast. Yet, I really did not know what I wanted to do—especially whether I wanted to stay in local government.

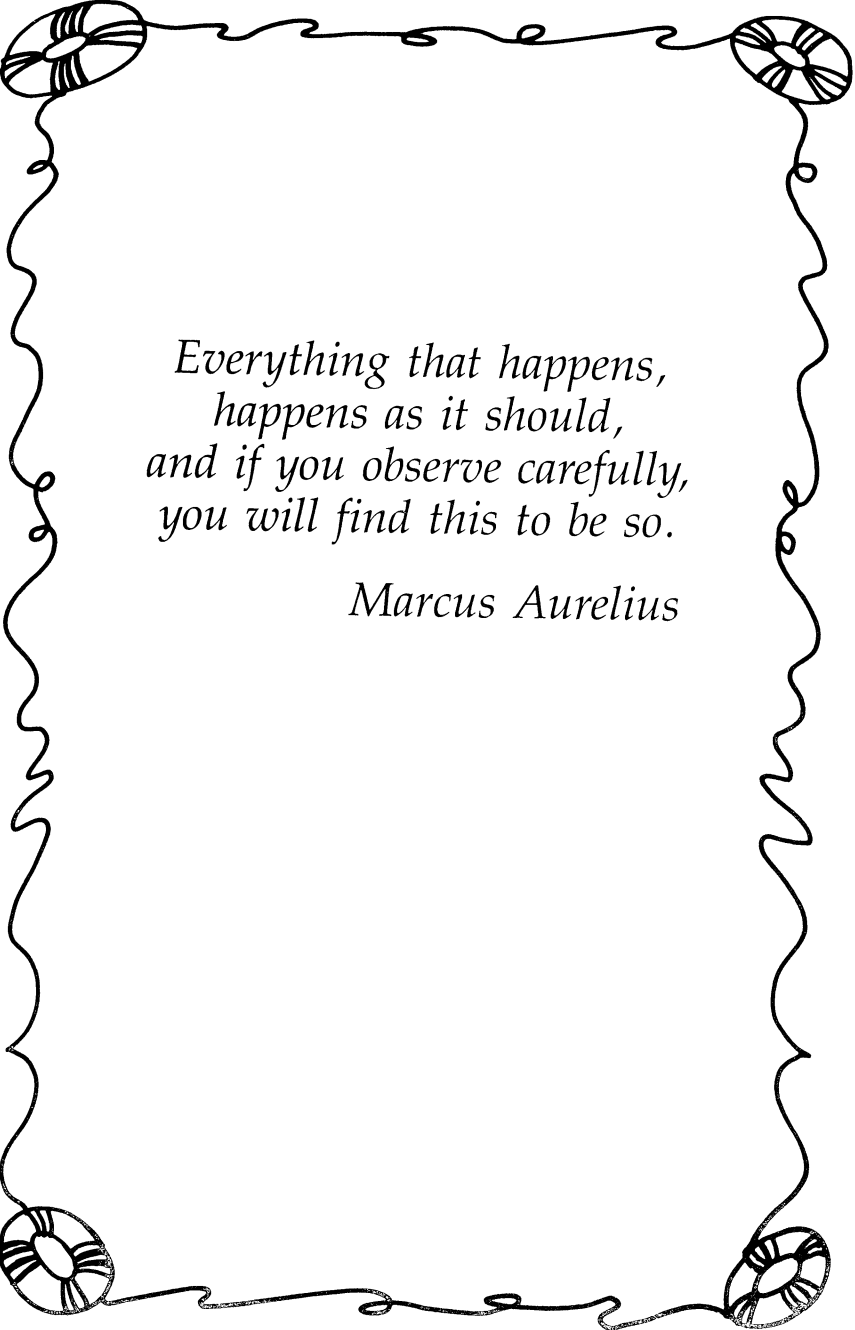
As 1981 drew to a close, my last consultant check was spent, and I filed with the unemployment compensation office. Panic set in. Fortunately, I had always thought about writing and consulting as an alternative career, so now was the time to start, with new personalized business cards and letterhead. The thought of using up my meager savings while the business got underway was frightening, but it was infinitely better to think of myself as *self-employed* than *unemployed*.

Then, suddenly, by way of a friend’s referral, I got a job with Cleveland’s United Way as Director of Government and Foundation Relations. What better way to combine all of my personal and

professional interests! I was close to my home town of Detroit, able to work *with* rather than *in* government, able to expand my knowledge and contact base with foundations, able to work with private sector executives, and able to remain in a position of helping people most in need. In my annual Christmas letter, I was able to tell friends that no longer did I feel just “lucky” but “truly blessed.” I should add, too, that during the Oberlin ordeal, regular attendance at church, which reached a new high at year’s end, provided much needed peace and comfort.

I do not wish to be discouraging about the local government management profession, especially for young, black, other minority, and female aspirants, but obviously it is not a simple road to travel. However, if one is good enough to make it to the top and stay there, I believe the profession is highly rewarding. My experience as a manager in establishing a youth council, mobilizing downtown merchants to beautify the city, attracting new industry, and making it possible for the elderly to live in rehabilitated homes made the effort I put in worthwhile to me.

What seemed like the beginning and the end, therefore, may really be just the beginning, for as one city manager-mentor once told me, “The profession gets in your blood.” So why not have one last expectation—that a black, female city manager can do it again!



*Everything that happens,
happens as it should,
and if you observe carefully,
you will find this to be so.*

Marcus Aurelius

So Why Shouldn't It Happen to Me?

John Wentz
Stockton, California

After nearly 25 years of success and satisfaction as a manager in three wonderful cities, I concluded that it would never happen to me—being fired. That was a mistake; it can happen to anyone when the chemistry is not right or when you have been there too long in the eyes of a new political element.

I did one thing right when it happened to me. I left with dignity, affirmative observations about the community, and gratitude for the work of deserving staff and citizens. After all, 98 percent of my contacts and experiences had been truly great. It is important to put the entire tour of duty into perspective.

So, after the parties and dinners are over and the dissection of the event by the press has died down, then what? I say, "Relax, you deserve it." Take a trip, get away, and don't rush to do anything constructive other than to savor for a while the relief of no longer being in the center of contention.

My experience taught me the virtues of being philosophical. Recall that the city management profession always has been uncertain. That is the penalty we pay for the exhilaration of achievement. Termination has happened to many managers who are as good as or better than you and I. And probably it is for the best because who wants to work for long in an atmosphere of antagonism? You might even want to relish some humor from the circumstance.

I learned, in sorting out my memories, that it was better to concentrate on the fun and satisfaction and pass over the irritations. In pursuit of philosophy, I found it helpful to read the observations of great thinkers. This quote from Dr. A.J. Cronin, for example, was a light for me: "The demands life makes may seem hard at times yet we ought not to whine. God never takes without giving something

in return. Disappointments and troubles are often the instruments with which He fashions us for better things to come.”

There was more to my learning than being relaxed and philosophical. On a practical basis, I found it urgent to keep busy. I made job seeking a real project, just as if I were organizing a government program. I assigned regular hours of the day to the effort. My activities included constructing a new resume, setting new goals, exploring all options as they came up, making phone calls, answering ads, writing letters, scheduling interviews and, above all, getting ideas and suggestions from my spouse and friends. I considered all possible job situations, not just city management, even though I had always thought of myself as a life-long member of the profession. I decided the outer world might not be all that bad.

I noted that this period of searching was also a period when I discovered the meaning of true friendship. I found there were some who listened, some who came up with suggestions, and some who just kept in touch. I would advise cherishing these associations that flower into closeness—next time it may be your turn to be supportive.

I found I could not spend all my time job hunting. There were always excruciating waits for replies to calls and letters and interview dates. I used this time to catch up on my “to do” list, a list my spouse was capable of filling up. The rigors of professional life had prevented my doing many useful tasks. We also enjoyed life by taking short day trips, socializing with friends, getting plenty of sleep for a change, and going places time never allowed before. We even began to enjoy it all and to thank the rascals.

In my case, there were a number of “almost hits.” It is always this way. I found my hardest task was to restrain myself from believing that a certain job prospect just had to pan out. Only the right one will. Don’t panic, despite the temptation, when the first several opportunities don’t crystalize. One way to curry your ego and maintain stability is to remember that the better the job was, the harder it will be to replace.

Then one day it happened to me, when I least expected it. The right thing came along, and I was off and away, fired by new enthusiasm and refreshed by my period of “beachcombing.”

* * *

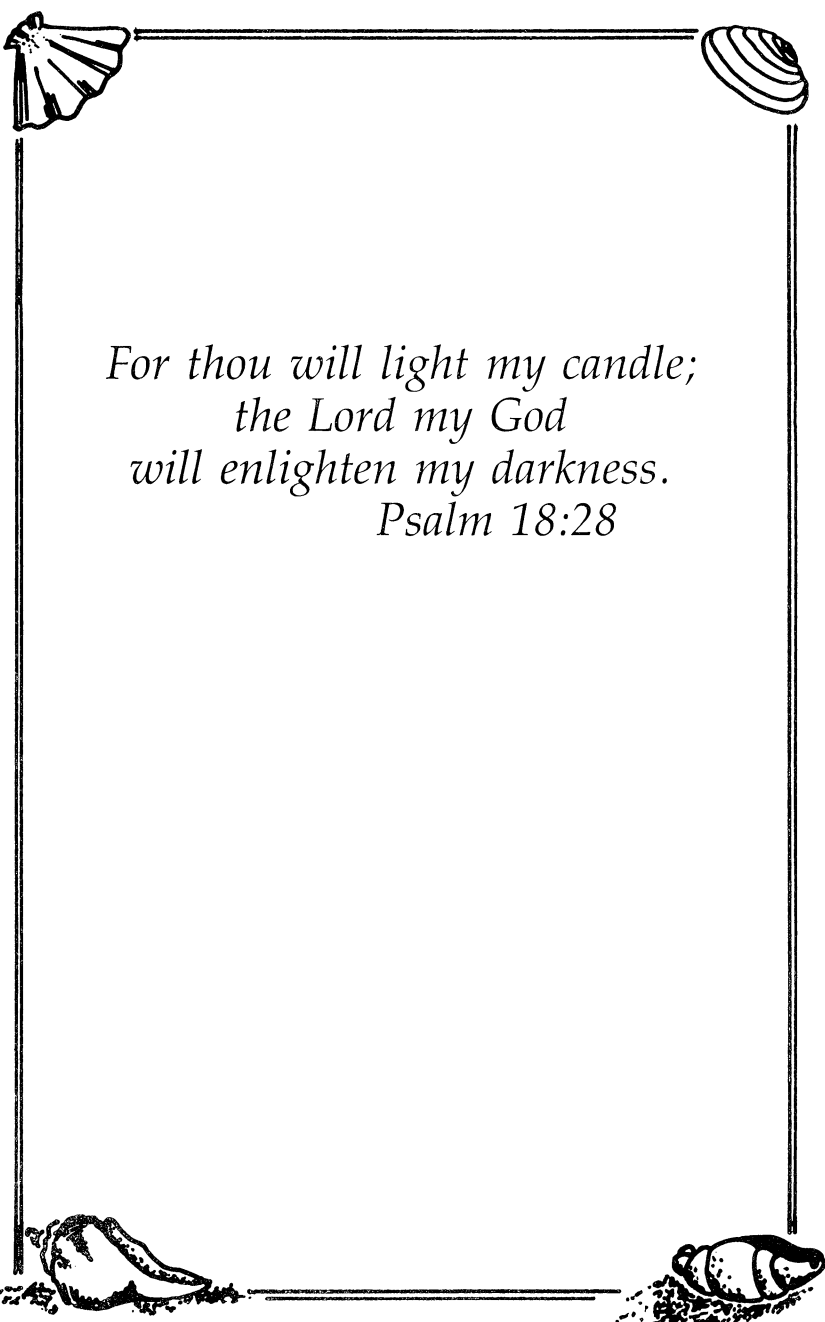
I can add a footnote about another kind of career change, because, since the experience I have written about, I have also had

the experience of retirement. Retirement is another kind of termination that requires some adaptation. Much of the early treatment I found similar—relaxing, philosophizing, taking trips, strengthening friendships.

My course was to find a “retirement” job. I figured that was the best way to avoid going to seed and an early grave. It had to be a job I could enjoy. I no longer needed to prove anything to anybody. I decided after 34 wonderful years in the public sector, I would see what working in the private sector was like.

I have found great satisfaction and remuneration there, too. I now can better understand some of my colleagues’ decisions to opt for the business world in mid-career. I once viewed them as deserters. I just had not walked in their shoes.

If you do go private, my advice is to associate with a non-bureaucratic, nimble, innovative, and affirmative-minded group. Because you can now be selective, this should be possible. At least, I have found it so. Maybe luck has a part, but people in the local government management profession have always, on balance, been lucky.



*For thou will light my candle;
the Lord my God
will enlighten my darkness.
Psalm 18:28*

Praise the Lord Anyway!

Edward and Gail Wohlenberg
Brea, California

What, religion in ICMA? Yes, we found God, not the manager position, at the center of our lives when our ship hit the rocks. Although we had been discovering that our ship was not entirely under our own command, it was really after we found ourselves out of work involuntarily that this point came sharply into focus. We began to search our souls for faith and direction. We had never quite gotten around to such an effort during the sunny years.

When we found ourselves unemployed, our family began to regroup and to talk out our situation. We wanted to know who really was at the helm. Here are some of the feelings we experienced, and what we did about them.

It's hard to imagine the depth and width of personal and family feelings that engulfed us when the reality of not being wanted as a city manager sank in. Managers have a great sense of public service and concern for making our communities better; it's easy to begin feeling indispensable. You may also share some of the recognition that a manager's ego becomes inflated by a position of leadership. Untold hours of commitment to the job, and all the attendant circumstances of life, seem to move managers to where far too much of their self-esteem is wrapped up in being a local government manager. You can make yourself quite vulnerable to your ship hitting the shore.

Fortunately, when it happened to us, a growing faith that God was in charge of our lives began to assert itself. Several events helped that along. About three years before the job separation, we experienced a Christian renewal weekend that dramatically changed our lives. We met people from our community in an entirely different context; we found lots of fellow travelers on a spiritual pil-

grimage. We experienced love in a new way, with people we had known previously but whom we now saw in a new dimension. This earlier experience was the beginning of an adventure in spiritual growth and living, but little did we realize how it would come to nurture and strengthen us in a critical hour.

Once the reality of our departure became a part of us, our thoughts turned to seeking new directions for our lives. The direction that was best for us seemed quite elusive, partly because we had predetermined our career path. But in trying to be open to God's direction rather than our own, new vistas began to open to us. Some of them were not what we expected; some of the job opportunities we would not have considered only a few years before.

In the depths of our uncertainty, we went with friends to a local pizza parlor one night. One of our favorite Christian folk singers was performing. Later in the evening, this singer told the audience that a friend of his was in the crowd who was out of work, and he dedicated his next song to those in this situation. The song was, "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow." What an impact that song had on us! It was just the message we needed.

As we began to be more honest in seeking direction, doors began to open, and others closed. Acting on the encouragement of friends, we acted upon those openings and closings, despite preconceived notions. Our career path was changing.

Other pragmatic actions helped. Much time was spent nurturing job opportunities, but time also went into fixing up the house, doing part-time consulting, exercising, and enjoying the family. Daily we prayed for direction and discernment. With the cloud of depression threatening, a good antidote was staying active and involved.

We strengthened family relationships. We tried to keep in touch with each other's anxieties and needs. We shared this journey together. Throughout the long 14 months, we never felt that all was lost. We were on this adventure together; it turned out to be one of the better times of our lives as a family.

We committed ourselves to managing our limited financial resources. Our children probably worked harder at this than did their parents; they often gave up new clothes and entertainment. Not knowing how long the journey would be led us to be prudent from the start.

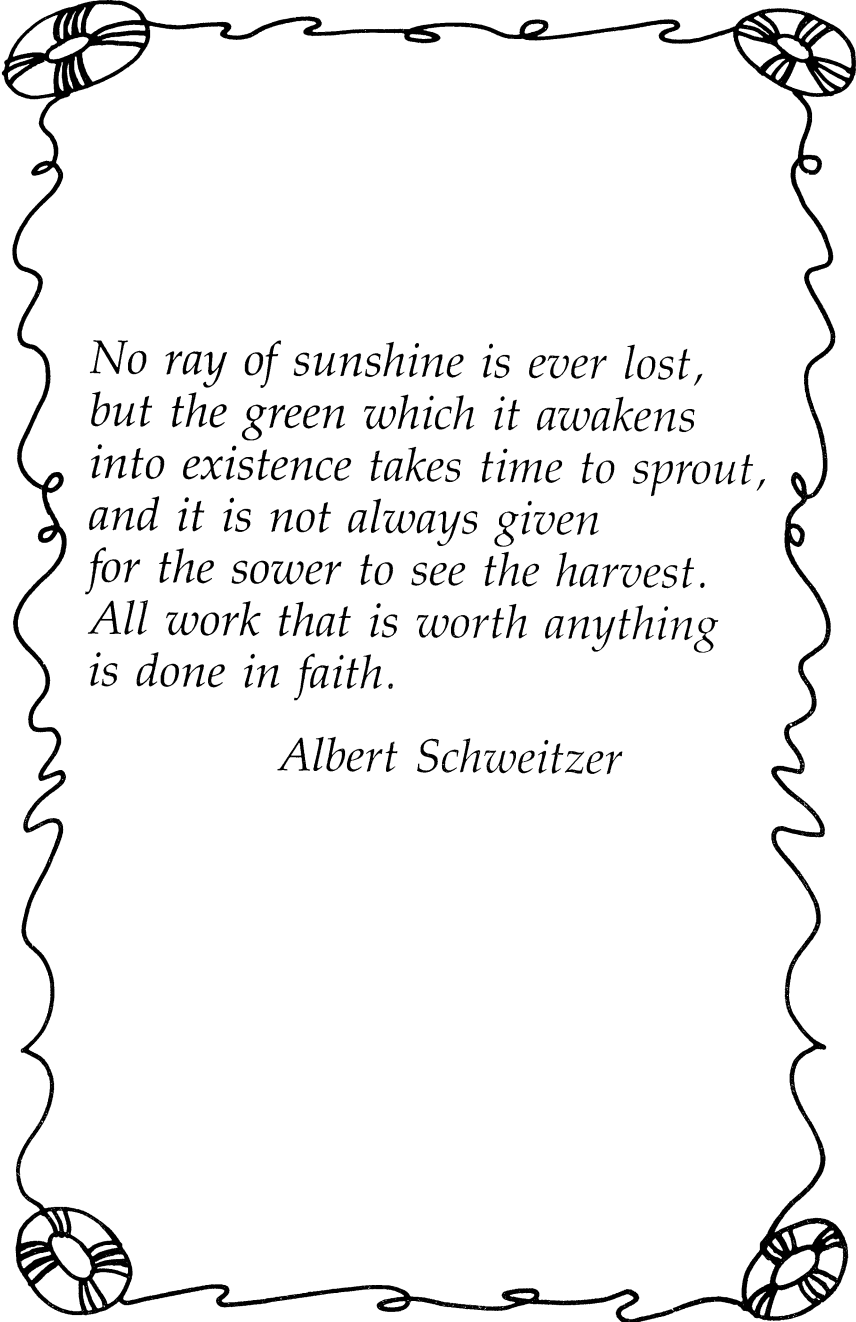
We're now convinced there is no magic key to getting on with one's next career step. But listening to others, reading lots of con-

structive books, praying, and, maybe most importantly, trusting that our ship would find safe harbor were the most useful steps we took.

What happened in our lives was the result of how we chose to view the experience. Our growing faith convinced us that God was in charge. When things go well, we all congratulate ourselves for handling life so tidily. But a shipwreck begins to shape up our beliefs and values. We came to recognize that this was a period of solid growth for the family and the manager.

In time, a new job appeared. With God now in the center of our lives, a local management position took on an entirely different perspective. The job is no longer the whole of us. We now regard local government management as a means to utilize our talents, as an opportunity to serve. The job lies a layer or two away from the core. We now have a confidence and strength that defies the council's decisions. Much fear has gone out of our lives.

How one handles these situations can be a positive or negative model for others. Meeting the challenge fearlessly can have a healthy impact upon those around you. So, praise the Lord anyway! He always comes through when we get out of the way.



*No ray of sunshine is ever lost,
but the green which it awakens
into existence takes time to sprout,
and it is not always given
for the sower to see the harvest.
All work that is worth anything
is done in faith.*

Albert Schweitzer

Wonderful Things Are Happening

Fran Aleshire

“Wonderful things are happening,” my friend told me over the phone. That statement gave me pause. I’d just told her the sad news about my husband losing his manager position, and my world lay in pieces around me. “You’re not serious. *What* wonderful things?” I asked.

“You’ll see. Remember, you have to have faith in the things you *don’t* see, not what you *do* see. Wonderful things *are* happening. Don’t doubt it.”

I knew my friend well enough to believe she just might have something. So I tried to turn away from all the disturbing things that appeared to be happening, and I focused instead on some elements that ordinarily I pass right over.

For instance, I noticed that the sun still came up, and when it went down in the evening it still painted the skies with a blend of soft pinks and oranges that eased the day into a sheltering night. I noticed the children next door still laughed and shrieked as they played their games. I noticed dogs went on wagging their tails and chasing balls and that my cat purred as loudly as ever when I stroked her. Apparently, the world meant to continue on its way; the universe was intact and untouched by our personal tragedy. That realization was a comfort.

Then I paid more attention to my husband. I could see his anguish. Yet he handled every contact with the press, friends who called, and staff members who empathized with a total absence of rancor. It seemed, in fact, his effort was to reassure every person that nothing truly dreadful had happened, that all was well. I never had any doubt about his competency in his work, but I don’t think I understood until then how strong he was and how sound. He and I

learned to appreciate and to nourish each other's strengths. We talked about these things and shared our confidence in each other, and, yes, that was a great comfort, too.

I checked out some other things. I found our friends thought no less of us, but rather quite the opposite. They wrote more, phoned more, and shared more personal ideas with us. Friendships deepened. At one time, colleagues invited us to dinner, and when we arrived there was a sign on the door: "Welcome, Fran and Frank." Wow! Nothing like that ever happened before. Other colleagues called from all over the country. We were still part of a profession.

Our tennis actually improved. The morning air was crisp and brilliant, and flooded the courts with light. We ran and played and stopped on the way home to watch the birds. We saw many birds we'd never seen before.

We read books and found some big, new ideas. Our reading stretched beyond the professional field and touched physics, religion, psychology, and philosophy. We were curious about great minds and great lives.

I began to think my friend might be right. Perhaps the trouble was in the way I had been conceptualizing the world and our purpose in life. Perhaps life was more subtle and complex than we had imagined.

When I was in my twenties, the purpose of life seemed simple indeed. What could it be but to find happiness? Then in my thirties and forties, achieving success became the goal shared by both my husband and me. We defined success as a nice home, healthy family, competency in work, and status among peers. Always there was the assumption that there would be some peak event—some point when the world would smile and say, "Well done."

But *this* event, this firing, was not in the script. It was incongruous, unreasonable. Apparently you could do everything right and have all turn out wrong. The "success" concept was shredded. The flaw lay in the world or in my thinking, and since there was little I could do to bend the world to my liking, I decided to be more observant, to let my thoughts run free.

Gradually, I learned that life is a process, never complete, never arriving at a point of fruition, but always opening out to something beyond. It is more like a river than a lake, more like dancing than sitting still. I couldn't encapsule life, I could only live it.

In life, there surely are moments that feel better than others, but every moment has its own potential. The bad moments carry within them more power because they shatter our small ways of viewing life

and force us past self-imposed limits. But more than that, the bad moments carry within them the seeds for the next good moments. My faith was renewed that the world is not set against us, but I saw operating an inexorable law of growth.

The point seems to be that we are to continue to grow and to develop and to strive for understanding, though it can never be complete. Mysteriously, the whole universe moves forward through individuals, and every activity reverberates somewhere.

As the months passed, our world returned to something like normal. I watched as the things we needed—home, work, relationships—were clothed in new forms, all more appropriate to the stage of life we now entered. Bemused, I took a measurement at year's end and found that in no way had we suffered loss. In fact, new ventures beckoned us on every side.

My friend was right; wonderful things were happening. The time on the beach yielded its pearls beyond price for us. One especially beautiful pearl was the strengthening of our marriage. For years we'd been working on the idea that we were not only marital partners but also a team—we had strengths and weaknesses that supplemented and complemented each other in our contact with the world. We had no desire to be identical people or to change one another; the idea was for each to become the person each was meant to be. We tried to help each other achieve that goal.

Came the shipwreck and what a perfect time to test our theory! My husband quickly discovered that he needed another pair of strong hands to help row ashore, not a passenger who cowered in the bottom of the boat. That helped him to be more tolerant of my efforts over the years to become someone in my own right rather than secondary to his more publicized career. I could be those "strong hands," because the kind of marriage I had gave me the freedom to work out my own wholeness.

I also noted my husband working on parts of himself that he hadn't had time to develop before. The poet in him reawakened, and he began to pay more attention to the people in his life. We were more in sympathy as his interests moved closer to those I had always promoted—taking time for family, for friends, for vacation, for music, for fun.

For my part, the shipwreck exposed me to the storms of the open sea. I understood more the reason why my husband, in his work, could not be as open, as warmly loving, as I could be at home. I appreciated the sturdiness that his being exposed to the elements for so many years had built into him. I understood the difficulty he

had in passing from one world to another. With this understanding, I could help his passages.

Rilke writes: "Once the realization is accepted that, even between the closest human beings, infinite distances continue to exist, a wonderful living side by side can grow up. If they succeed in loving the distance between them, they will then see the other whole against a wide sky."

Though the attention was upon my husband and the firing appeared to be his big time of trial, we went beachcombing *together*. Sometimes he walked in one direction while I took another, and we picked up different shells. But we came back to examine them together. This was just as much an exploratory time for me as for him, and my life has expanded since then along with his. We are partners in whatever happens to us, and that is good.

If someone reading this is going through a difficult time, I urge you, however hard it may be, to say and believe: "Wonderful things are happening." You will see that it is so

Time Out for Refreshment

Donald Eppley
Covington, Kentucky

In May of 1974 I arrived in Lake Oswego, Oregon as city manager. My entry was delightful, accompanied by a great deal of excitement and anticipation of a rewarding career.

The first six months proceeded nicely, with many administrative changes and other accomplishments and with the total support of the city council that hired me. In the seventh month, half of the council decided that government was no longer as much fun as it used to be, and the council makeup changed. Two years after that I was working for an entirely new city council.

The issues of the community were not unlike those of communities around the country—namely, rapid growth, citizen involvement at a hiatus, rapidly changing expectations, and a zeal on the part of the elected officials to change everything. The battles to change the ground rules of the council-manager system raged constantly. Many councilmembers had a desire to try their hands at being city manager, which created the need for me to swallow hard and to maintain my equilibrium.

In May 1976, the council decided in a four-to-three vote that it was time to have “their own manager.” Suddenly, I was faced with the prospect of uprooting my family and finding a new place to pursue my career. Although the decision was reached in May, I continued in office until October when the new manager came on board.

When the whirlwind months between May and October were almost over, I realized a Monday morning would soon come when I wouldn’t jump in the city car and travel to my familiar office at city hall. It was then that I started to ask, “Why me? I’ve been a good and humble public servant over the past years, bled when necessary, upheld the honor of the profession, dutifully read *PM Magazine* and conferred with my colleagues. How dare they do this to me? What do I do now?”

These questions pressed in heavily upon me the first Monday morning I was cast adrift. Several years before I had wondered why managers were so interested in employment contracts because, after all, we are true professionals. My thoughts certainly have changed on that subject! I thank God for severance pay.

I was fortunate in the amount of support that came from the community. This support included phone calls, letters, and offers to help me search for the next step in my career. People I didn't realize were true friends suddenly became important. The weeks in transition would have been most difficult without the positive support of my wife and children, who also were having their traumas because of the unknowns facing us.

A most positive transformation occurred as I began to turn my thoughts to career possibilities. Had I spent this time playing the game of "poor me," the time spent would have been frivolous. The key to my professional growth over the six-month period "on the beach" was activity. For the first time, I asked myself, "Who am I?" and "Where am I going?" I talked to many people in industry and in other cities. I hired out as a municipal consultant. This work was very rewarding because I came to know my colleagues in ways I hadn't known them before. I grew to admire even more the strengths, creativity, skills, and professionalism of city managers.

It would have been easy to spend time denouncing myself, but fortunately, other city managers took the time to share their experiences and let me know that I was still the same person that I used to be when I had the title to wrap around myself. Also, getting calls from my former bosses and managers from around the country made me realize how important a nationwide support system is. Everyone should realize that to reach out for help is healthy and should not be construed as loss of face.

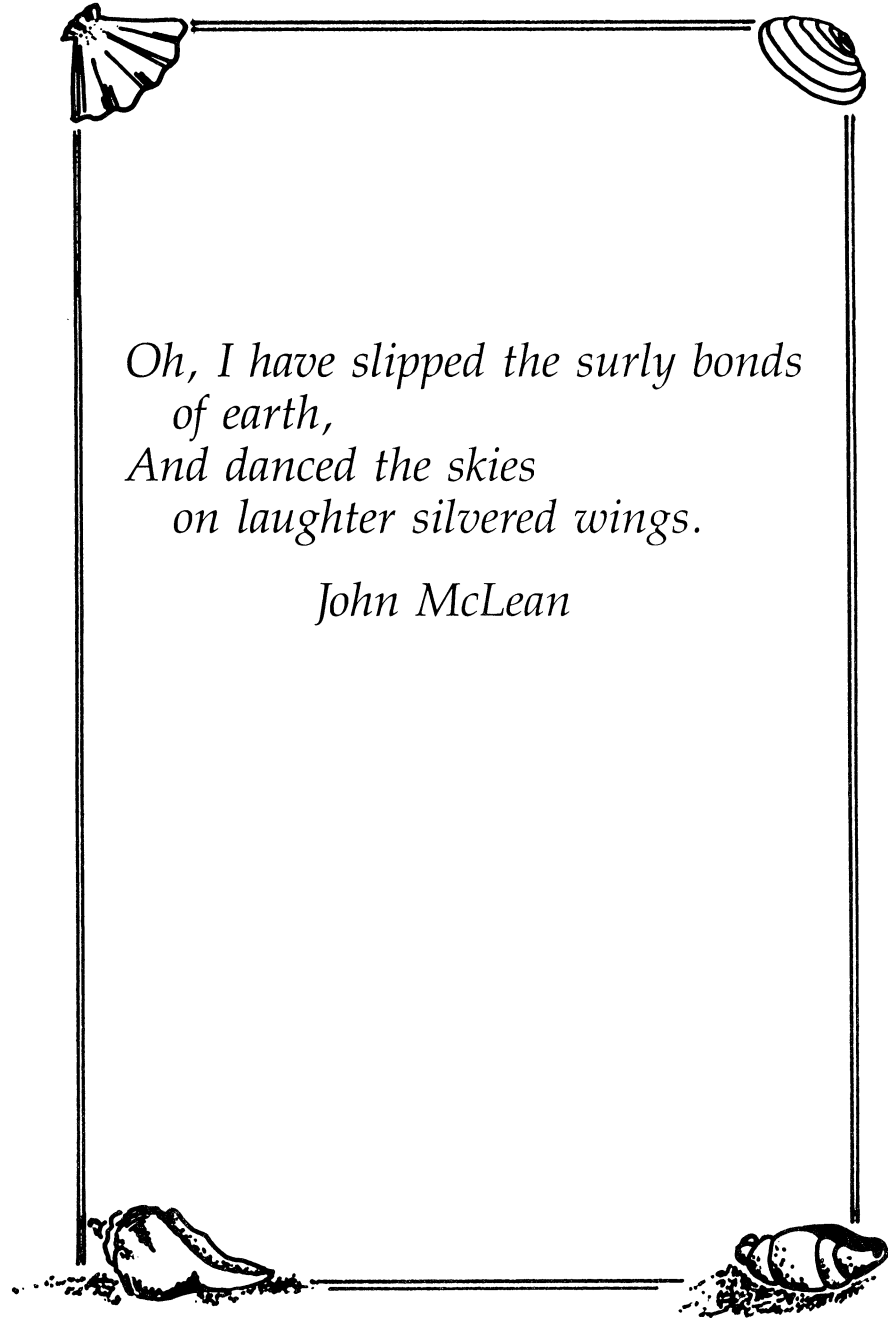
My beachcombing experience had many ups and downs, including disappointment at several interviews and, perhaps worst of all, lining up at the unemployment office with the people I previously considered social misfits. Through it all, teaching and consulting, I was probably as busy as I ever will be. Truthfully, being unemployed can be more rewarding in many ways than being a city manager. I had never before had the opportunity to look at myself so intensely and find out that being a whole person isn't necessarily tied to our normal, secure eight o'clock-to-midnight jobs. Being fired isn't the end of the world.

Then, the right job turned up, and I found myself in a career heading up personnel administration for the State of Oregon. Inter-

estingly enough, this appointment came at a time when many of the city management opportunities came also. When it rains, it pours. Now, when I think of the months I spent in agony, wondering if all of those job applications gurgling and bubbling through their processes would ever come to fruition, I could kick myself for not enjoying my “vacation” period more fully.

Reviewing my experience, these are the steps I found most useful:

- Keep active.
- Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses honestly.
- Seek friends and colleagues to help you evaluate.
- Give your family the support it needs.
- Explore alternative ways to make a living.
- Accept offers of assistance positively—don’t take away the pleasure other people find in helping.
- Think well of yourself.
- Make as many inquiries for job possibilities as your energy allows. The more hooks you throw in the water, the more chance you have to catch a fish.



*Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds
of earth,
And danced the skies
on laughter silvered wings.*

John McLean

Life on the High Wave

Rolfe Wagner
Aztec, New Mexico

There are pastoral city managers and evangelistic city managers; there are Pattons and Eisenhowers; there is offense and there is defense. Some folks live their whole lives in one town—are born, schooled, work, and die without venturing over a half-tank of gas from their birthplace. Others, like me, are gypsies who, after a while, are insatiably curious about what lies over the next hill.

Some folks don a comfortable, predictable routine like an old sweater and love the order and stability of a lifestyle that would make me pine away like a caged bird. I guess I'm driven by the pioneer genes of parents and grandparents who left secure nests and went West, mostly just for the hell of it.

I've never been satisfied with anything. I hope I never am. I've never seen an organization that couldn't be run better, an idea that couldn't be improved upon, or a chaos that could not be ordered. Nearly every job I have ever taken on had some element about it that represented a real challenge. I always have regarded problems as the raw material of success and have searched out that mean, nasty problem that no one else would touch. Many compete for the rewards of this world, but not many folks are out there fighting for the messes. That's why I don't worry about being fired or about getting another job. Usually the city I'm managing is so screwed up, nobody else wants it, and if things get too hot, there's somewhere worse out there waiting. Hot dawg! I can hardly wait.

Now, if you were an aggressive elected official, would you choose me for a scuffle? That's about as dumb as walking into the Lonesome Pine Bar in Show Low and picking a fight with the biggest, toughest lumberjack in the bar. Folks do not mess around unnecessarily with a berserker, and I certainly have that reputation.

I'd sooner fight than almost anything. You know you are alive when you walk with peril.

There is another side of the coin that is important. How many days of last year do you vividly remember? One or two weekends? A couple of special outings? I decided a long time ago that there may never be that time in the future when I can do all those things most folks say they'll do "one of these days." I decided, by damn, to do 'em right now! Every day I pay myself in the richest coin there is, by living my life fully and zestfully.

I work a little and play a lot. I am playing right now as I write. I'm also having a ball working with bright, intelligent staff members solving tough problems, but I make time for recreational reading, picking the guitar, learning the five-string banjo (a lifetime challenge), fishing, and writing. How can I do all that while holding down the job of city manager? Easy—I do what's fun and delegate the rest. That's why I'm a manager, not a staff member. I want to decide what to do and not be told.

To sum up, my personal philosophy combines those of Teddy Roosevelt (who said in essence that he pitied those who dared not to risk greatly for fear of failure) and those of my two favorite fictional characters, Cyrano de Bergerac and Don Quixote. So, if you see a city manager with a big nose, speaking softly while tilting at windmills with a big stick, say howdy, 'cause, brother, that's me.

Suddenly, Silently

Today my ship came home.
Nobody saw her come.
Suddenly, silently
she lay alongside the quay.

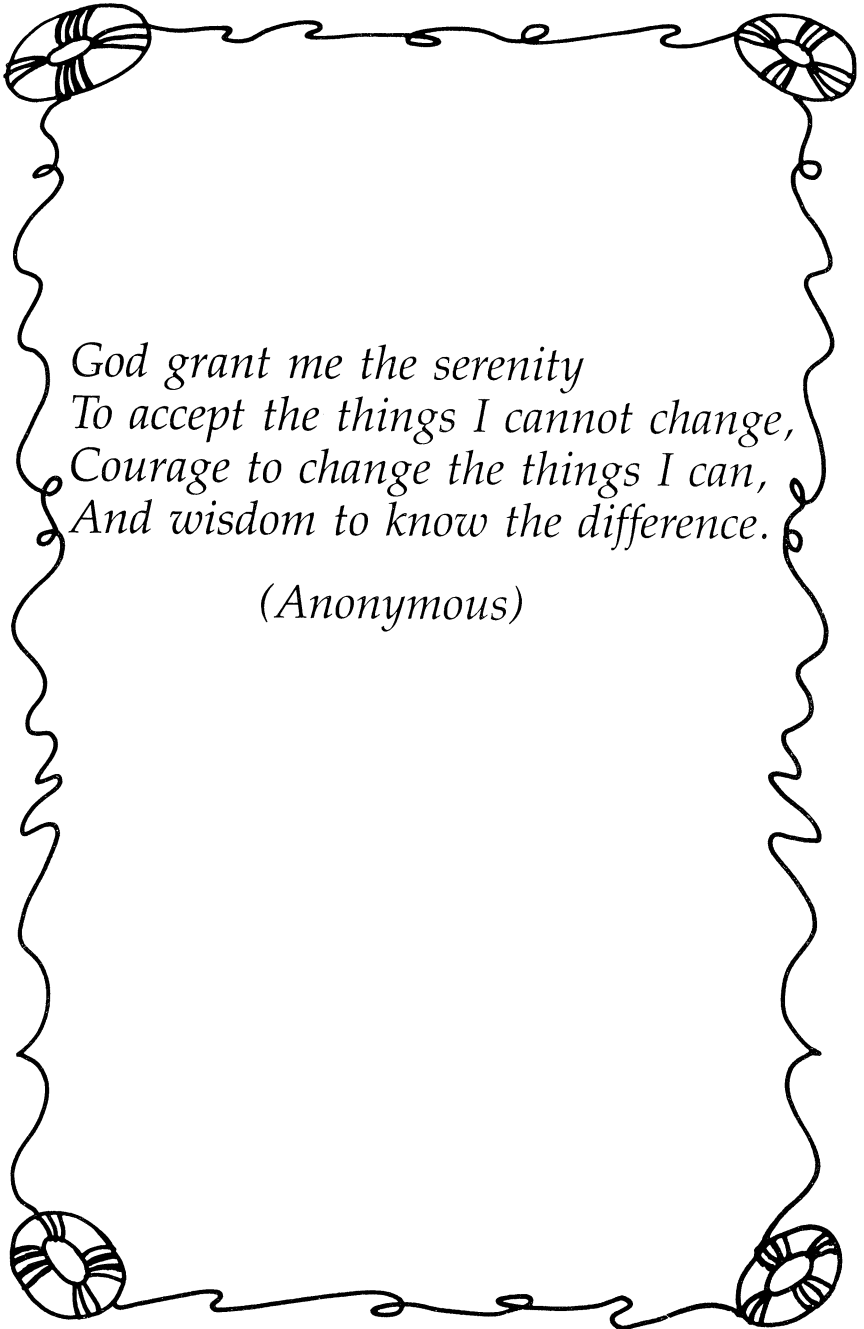
Pirate and wrecker, reef and shoal
did not prevail
to stay her schedule.
Lightning and storm
did her no harm.
The icebergs stood aside
in their cold pride.
The hostile submarine pack
turned back.
The searching bombers failed to sight
her speeding silhouette.
Friendly fleets on patrol
picked up her signal.
The Customs gave her clearance
far out at sea.

Suddenly,
with open holds and swinging cranes
and gangways down,
she lay alongside the quay.

*Peter Henniker-Heaton
Jubilee and Other Poems*

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*God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.*

(Anonymous)

What We Found on the Beach—A Spouse and Manager Story

Ethel and Richard Foote
Groton, Connecticut

Ethel Foote—A Spouse's View

Twenty-nine years ago, when we'd been married two and a half years, Dick came home one day from his graduate class in local government at the University of Michigan and said, "I think I'd like to be a city manager." I asked, "What's that?" His answers were inspiring, and I gave wholehearted support.

Neither of us ever regretted this decision, despite sometimes saying, "There must be a better way to make a living." But a troublesome time came for us 10 years ago when we were cast up "on the beach." Even though we experienced growth and a deepening of insights and our love for each other, it was a painful time for us and for our four children. Simultaneous crises occurred in our lives, as so often happens. When the resolution came, it wasn't clear cut, but rather a situation presenting a series of challenges.

Perhaps sharing our story will help others know how to survive and become stronger. The feeling of isolation is the worst part of the experience—to be avoided at all costs. Isolation is a threat especially if a manager's town is geographically far away from another empathetic manager couple. Managers and spouses offer an unspoken bond and camaraderie that is unique—no explanations of the situation are needed.

In our early years, we learned some lessons that strengthened us when the test came. First, the manager and spouse are best friends. Dick could say things to me in confidence that he couldn't say to anyone else. From the beginning, we thought of ourselves as a team. Second, we kept home as the heart of all, and we carried our idea of home wherever we went. Third, we learned to be content with a job well done and not to expect public praise. The public is fickle and memories short. We did not rely on recognition for our contentment. Fourth, we learned to adopt each community we live

in and to act as if we were settling down for good. We believed we should not neglect opportunities to express love even though our time in a community might be short.

Since my teenage years, my faith in God has included the belief that I am an instrument of His Will. Little did I know my life would include moving hundreds of miles. Moving was always hard for me, for reasons I won't detail, other than to say I was an only child with a small extended family. I desired roots, stability, approval, and friends.

Dick's first city administrator job at age 30 lasted four and one-half years. We had two children by then and added a third while we were there. It was a positive experience, as Dick worked hard as the city's first-ever manager to win the town over to this "new-fangled form of government." But there were anxious moments, too, for such neophytes as we. I pasted Kipling's "If" to the bathroom mirror where Dick could read it every morning while shaving. This first experience opened us to the meaning of the Serenity Prayer, which begins this article.

Dick's second job as a city manager was in a suburban community of 30,000, and he was again the first manager. After eight months a new mayor, hostile to the city manager plan, was elected. Eighteen months later, when an agenda item requested a merit pay increase for Dick, a councilmember rose and moved that "the city manager be fired." Fortunately, the motion was tabled, and the community showed strong support for the manager. The fuss died down, but after several months, a new and fine opportunity was offered elsewhere.

We moved hundreds of miles to a community where Dick served as city manager for more than seven years until an April 1972 election produced a three-to-two party split in the council for the first time in 20 years. Two and a half months later, right after completion of the budget, Dick was asked to meet with the majority faction, which included the mayor, on a Friday evening. The mayor asked for Dick's resignation, with no reasons given.

At this point, 18 years after entering the profession, our affairs seemed at a very low ebb. I personally was coping with problems already overwhelming. My mother, who lived with us, was very ill and required much care. I also had returned to full-time work to help with finances. We had four children by then, ages 8, 11, 14, and 16, so with all these responsibilities, it was impossible for us to get away and recover our poise.

For the first time, and at the worst time, close, intimate communication was hobbled. Dick and I kept to ourselves, for fear of hurting one another by sharing deep, fearful feelings.

While struggling with our own feelings, we found articulation difficult enough with each other but impossible with our teenagers. To this day, I carry grief for our inability to share with them. Although we understood the importance of communicating to our children all that we were going through—our struggles and also our faith—we couldn't.

The loss of a job is like the loss of a loved one, the grieving process and steps are the same—denial, anger, depression, eventual resolution, and acceptance. Each stage must be worked through. To delay the hard work involved is to court even more serious trouble.

I found myself going from one list of tasks to another, seven days a week. Nothing was ever completed, and with the whole family in the doldrums, there was little positive feedback, praise, reward, or gratitude. Expression of any of these qualities would be a great assistance in lifting the family up.

So what came of all of this? Four great lessons:

1. We truly learned to pray for our enemies, to love them, and to overcome thoughts of getting even.
2. We learned to give our anxiety to the Lord. We gave up sleepless nights, and said: "There's nothing so bad, Lord, that you and I together can't cope with it."
3. We avoided the "What if's" and "If only's" and learned to take one step at a time, facing forward.
4. We incorporated into our lives the meaning of these verses:
"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)
"Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." (Luke 11:9)

After Dick left city hall, we continued living in that city for more than five more years. It was our time to sort out options and alternatives. Friends came forward to let us know they cared. Dick served a short stint as Deputy CAO in a large neighboring county, working for a colleague. Political changes soon caused that colleague to resign. Dick stayed on, serving in a middle-management position, allowing us to stay in the community until two children could

graduate from high school. In due time, the opportunity came for a position again in city management, and we moved on again to a new town.

In our new state, there is an awareness of the need for fellowship, to build a network of managers and spouses. There are occasional Saturday luncheons for managers' wives and assistants' wives, an annual Christmas party, and an annual summer pot luck porch picnic. This all helps support the networking essential for the "Care and Feeding of City Managers and Their Spouses."

Richard Foote—A Manager's Observations

Ethel's summary of our life in the manager profession proves how essential the spouse-family relationship is in helping the manager to survive time on the beach. It would be many times more difficult without such support and sharing. Ethel has covered our story thoroughly; here are a few of my observations.

There is a tendency to talk a lot about growth, lessons learned, and the "stiff upper lip" response to being terminated. But, let's face it, the first thing after the initial shock is to feel pain. It hurts, no matter what one does or what anybody tells you, and that period of pain cannot be avoided or postponed. Suppressing it is the worst thing. The whole process of pain, grief, and anger must run its course.

Professional colleagues need to understand that, and not feel strange about talking to the victim about what has happened. In fact, a manager in transition needs to hear from friends and fellow professionals soon and often. It has nothing to do with what you do or say, just communicating support and caring is essential. The worst feeling is a sense of estrangement from colleagues.

During my 14 months on the beach, I kept busy much of the time doing consulting. Every one of my clients came about because of the initiatives of fellow managers. There is hardly any more meaningful support possible. Ultimately, securing a full-time position working for a fellow manager was the finest measure of the understanding of colleagues.

No matter what support and strength comes from spouse, family, friends, and colleagues, it is difficult not to feel negative about oneself if the transition lasts more than a few weeks. I find, upon looking back, that I handled some interviews poorly during that period, simply because I felt pressured to do well. Trying too hard can hurt more than help, and personal or professional assis-

tance may be indicated. An out-of-work manager should not feel apprehensive about seeking professional counseling. It is no sign of weakness. After a few years in other capacities in county government, I used an executive personnel counseling firm and found its services quite valuable, especially in overcoming undesirable interview habits that I had unknowingly developed. I wish I had done it sooner.

For managers who have never faced involuntary severance, a contingency plan for such an unhappy event is wise. Some thought about what to do if you are faced with the need for interim income and survival is important.

It does not help to take a head-in-the-sand attitude and to believe it cannot happen to you. I'm sure I would have handled many aspects of the transition better had I really thought about it and planned ahead. The very process of making such an effort might help prevent a firing or forced resignation. At least planning for such an occurrence will make you a more effective manager from day to day.

One's inner strength is a critical element in handling a transition. Because my own commitment to my faith is so much more complete today, I would handle a similar situation much differently, and I believe more positively, than I did 10 years ago. Once again, it must be admitted that one's own resources alone are not adequate to meet the test.

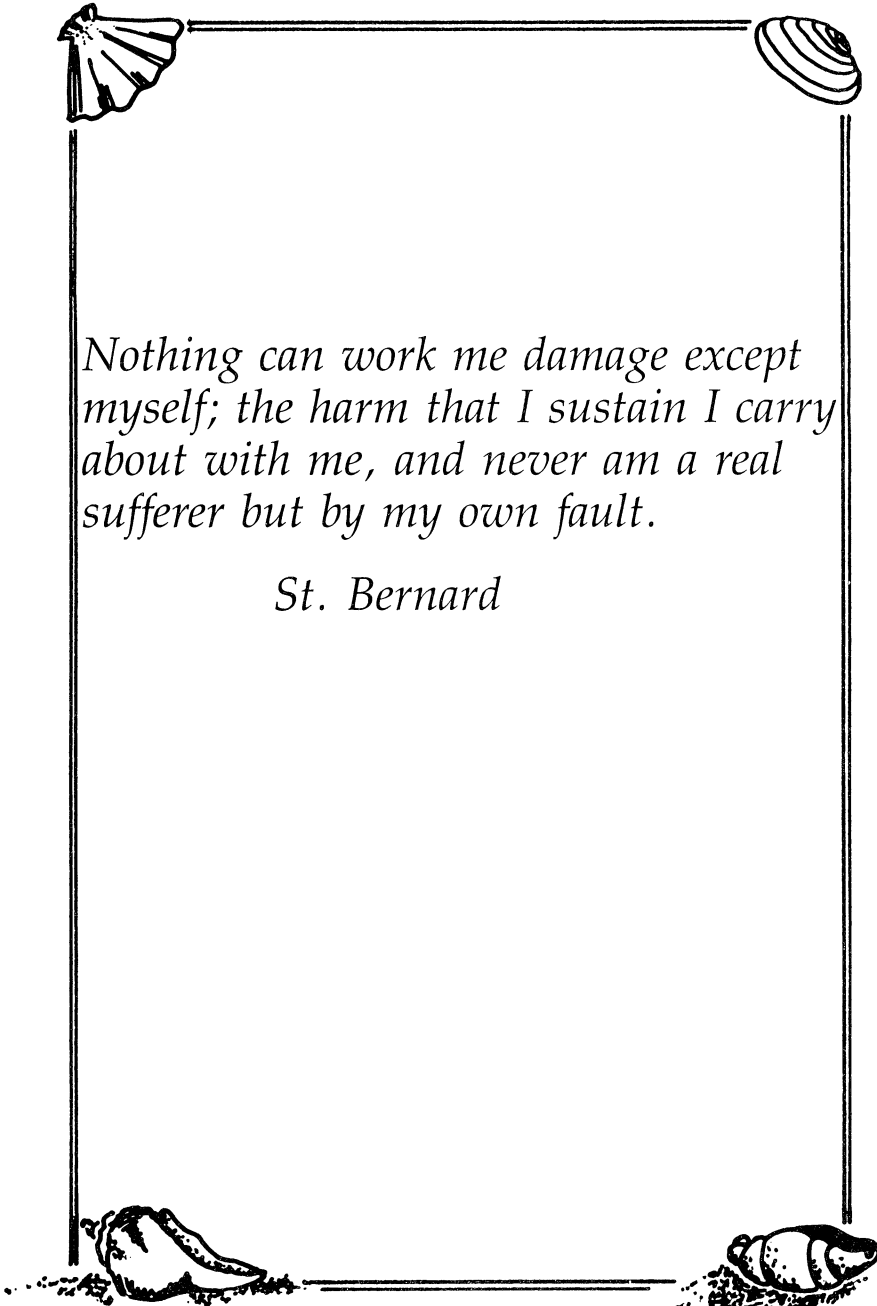
All in all, I suspect a final conclusion for most professional managers is that there is no truly happy alternative to being the manager. My own experience of alternative employment, in a mid-level position in a large county government, came to a point of frustration and loss of control. Even with all the headaches and heartaches that come with a municipal management career, there is nothing quite like the manager's role. Ultimately, the manager role offers a degree of latitude and opportunity for initiative that few jobs do. There is a strong pull to get back in the arena with the lions in spite of any higher wisdom.

Finish each day and be done with it. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in—forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely, and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Traces On the Sand: Sign Posts for Beachcombers

Frank and Fran Aleshire



Nothing can work me damage except myself; the harm that I sustain I carry about with me, and never am a real sufferer but by my own fault.

St. Bernard

The Law of Compensation

Beset by the vagaries of human fortune, we long to know if there is some system of justice more dependable than that which appears to govern us. Our media besiege us with images of calamity, and we become disoriented when personal tragedy strikes. Where can we look for reassurances that there is some order and stability to life?

In spite of our focusing attention on the disasters of life, in practice we behave as if there is a real payoff for principled behavior. The reason must be based on common human experience, the fact that we observe in our private lives the working out of laws of balance and adjustment.

We observe, for example, that to eat is good, but to eat too much is not. To exercise is to gain health; to over-exercise is to suffer pain. To acquire power is satisfying, but the envy and animosity that power breeds dissipates the satisfaction. To become head of an organization is stimulating and produces growth; such a position also consumes one's time and blots out other areas of life.

Sometimes in life everything seems to go our way without great effort on our part. Then dry periods follow when, struggle as we will, nothing goes well. A rush of activity is succeeded by quiet periods. We learn to expect these fluctuations in life, to hold on through the trying times, and to rejoice in the fruitful days.

Thus, a perfect equity appears in all parts of life, a balance that discourages excess. This idea is expressed in the currently popular concept of the zero-sum society that likens the world to a mathematical equation in which pluses and minuses balance out. In such a world, success by competition proves an illusion because the winner always pays a price. The operation of this balancing mechanism

would be more obvious if we factored in the intangibles and stopped focusing on material rewards. Then we would see the penalty the rich person pays in family relationships, and what the manipulative person pays in the loss of friendship and respect. If we did take into calculation all causes and effects, we would see operating a great Law of Compensation.

The Law of Compensation affirms that every act carries within it its own consequences as the seed is in the fruit and the fruit produces seed. Every good act rewards itself, so it is impossible for a person to do good and to suffer evil, though effects in the short run can be deceiving. On the other hand, punishment is an inherent part of the evil act and cannot fail to follow in due course. The workings of the Law are exact.

The vicious person, the schemer, never, in fact, holds sway for long. Although this type spreads fear and appears to have little opposition, behind the scenes the lines are silently drawn. By chosen excesses, the individual is brought down.

In the contrast, the good are blessed even by their faults. Humility is their shield and by this defense, they are able to examine their weaknesses and turn them to strengths.

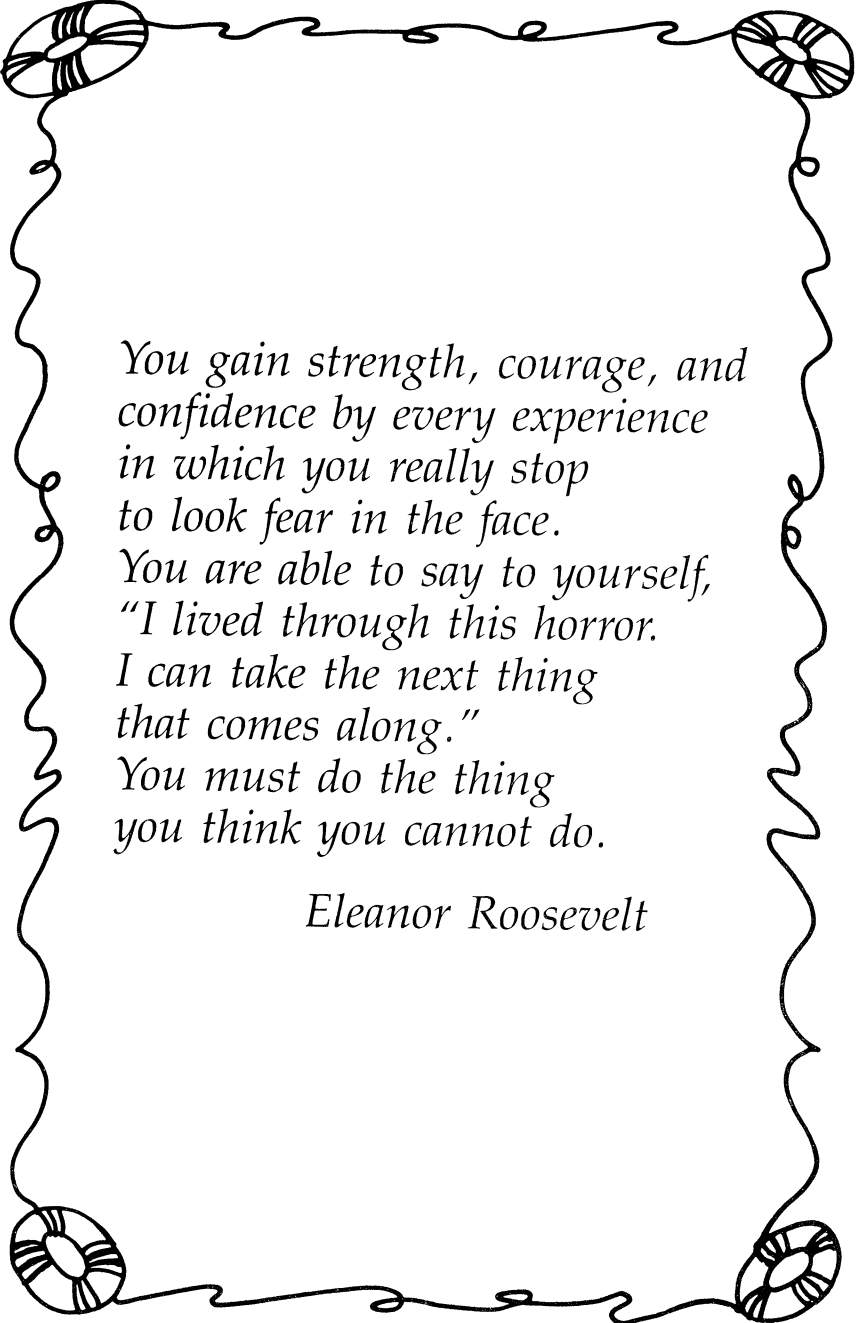
The concept of a Law of Compensation can be of great assistance to the manager/spouse team at the time of trouble. How comforting it is to know that revenge is not the issue, that anger does not suit the occasion, that adjusting the situation is not their personal responsibility. It is those who have behaved unkindly or unjustly who are in the greatest danger. Those who have suffered wrong are safe.

The unfolding drama of the council's action, the press's reaction, the pricks and stabs of personal hurt are but a sideshow in a far greater drama. Who has done right and who has done wrong will be clarified by the Law, and the consequences will be adjusted. Of greater importance is what the individuals involved do to seize the moment to add to the store of sanity and love in human affairs. What personal growth will follow? In what measure will the tide that constantly threatens to erode faith and to belittle efforts be turned back?

Who can deny with certainty that the saving of the world rests more on the outcome of the individual's struggle to keep his or her vision of good intact than upon the changing of the guard in human governments?

The personal accounts of managers and spouses that tell of how they used their time on the beach to better their condition give

assurance that the Law of Compensation is working. These people found themselves tested as never before. Certainly no one welcomed the testing time, yet in each case they found hidden treasures in the beach sands that enabled them to take on the next challenge with more confidence, more self-knowledge, more love and humility. If we had even more understanding, we might greet the bad times with hopeful anticipation, expectant of the good that must surely follow.



You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.

You are able to say to yourself, "I lived through this horror.

I can take the next thing that comes along."

You must do the thing you think you cannot do.

Eleanor Roosevelt

On the Killing of Dragons

After the first days of crisis have passed, it's best to get right at the business of killing dragons. Dragons are the fears and angers rattling round and round in your mental closets. Often husband and wife conceal these feelings to spare each other worry. Yet what is kept in secret tends to persist and grow to dominate thought.

Try making lists. Each of you write down the things that you are angry and fearful about; then, share the lists. Angry thoughts and fearful thoughts make up the thinking that causes the most torment and blockage; hardly a good, useful idea can sneak through. And that's what you need most—good, useful ideas.

Sharing angers and fears gives the two of you many benefits. When you communicate about important feelings, you begin to build yourselves into a support team. You'll learn things about each other you did not know. You're sure to find some hidden assets and strengths. Also, the mere exercise of ventilating these scary thoughts causes some of them simply to vanish.

Here's our list.

Manager

Spouse

I'm angry because:

The council did not give me any hearing, any warning, any cause.

I thought at least some of the councilmembers were personal friends.

The injustice! I know how much my spouse has given, how good!

The indignity, the humiliating feeling that we can be ejected from home and community.

Manager

Spouse

I'm fearful of:

Getting another job after being fired.

Moving again: losing friends, selling the house, making new friends.

How I'm going to meet my financial needs.

Losing the thread of *my* career, having to change jobs.

Facing my colleagues.

Explaining to everyone what happened.

Being unemployed.

Never having a real home.

Finding I am to blame.

My spouse losing faith and self-confidence.

Being rejected in the next job.

Being at the mercy of some irrationality I don't understand.

There is a specific technique that we used that you might find works for you too. This technique is based on the concept of *reversal*. Think of the sun shining on the earth, which is spherical. Think of the bright, glowing side of the sphere and then imagine the dark, shadowed side. The earth is one. All you need do to experience the light is to wait for it to turn. Or, imagine you are more in control than that and can simply turn the sphere around toward the ever-shining sun. By reversing the position of the sphere, you have moved from shadow into light.

Ranier Maria Rilke, an Austrian poet, expressed the idea in the following way:

We must embrace our existence as widely as we can; everything, even the unheard-of must be within its potential. This is the only courage required of us: to be brave in the face of the strangest, the oddest, the most incomprehensible things we may meet. In life, we are placed in the element most congenial to us. We have no reason to be suspicious of the

world, for it is not set against us. Its terrors are our terrors; if dangers appear, we must try to love them. And if only we organize our life in accord with the principle which tells us to lay hold of the most difficult without fail, then the thing which appears to us most alien will become the most familiar and precious. How could we ever forget those myths about dragons who at the final moment turn into princesses; perhaps all the dragons of our lives are princesses who are only waiting to be seen as beautiful and courageous . . . So you must not be alarmed . . . if a sadness rises up in front of you larger than you have ever seen before; if an unrest, like light and cloud-shadow, comes over your hands and all your doings. You must consider that something is happening to you, that life has not forgotten you, that it holds you in its hand; it will not allow you to fall.

Within every anger and within every fear there lies the potential for personal growth and transcendence; that is, rising above what is tormenting you and what torments us all. The way you can do it is by turning every negative into a positive, by reversing what seems to be into what you know must be true, by refusing to linger in the shadow and instead turning bravely to the light. You probably won't win every argument, but you'll win enough to make all the difference.

Let's see how this works.

Examples of Reversals

About anger: I'm not responsible for the bad manners, the ignorance, or poor judgment of others. That is their problem to live with. I cannot be hurt by the errors of others because I refuse to act the part of a victim.

True friendship is offered without expectation of return. The image of "friend" I bear in my heart cannot be effaced by anyone else.

"Mark the perfect man and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." (Psalm 37:37.) God protects and defends the good. What other security is needed?

About fear: My idea of home is intact: it is peace, the warmth of family, the security of loving relationships, the harmony of a well-

ordered life. If I move from one physical environment to another, this idea of home will simply be re-clothed to fit the new surroundings. Home is imperishable, established, and permanent.

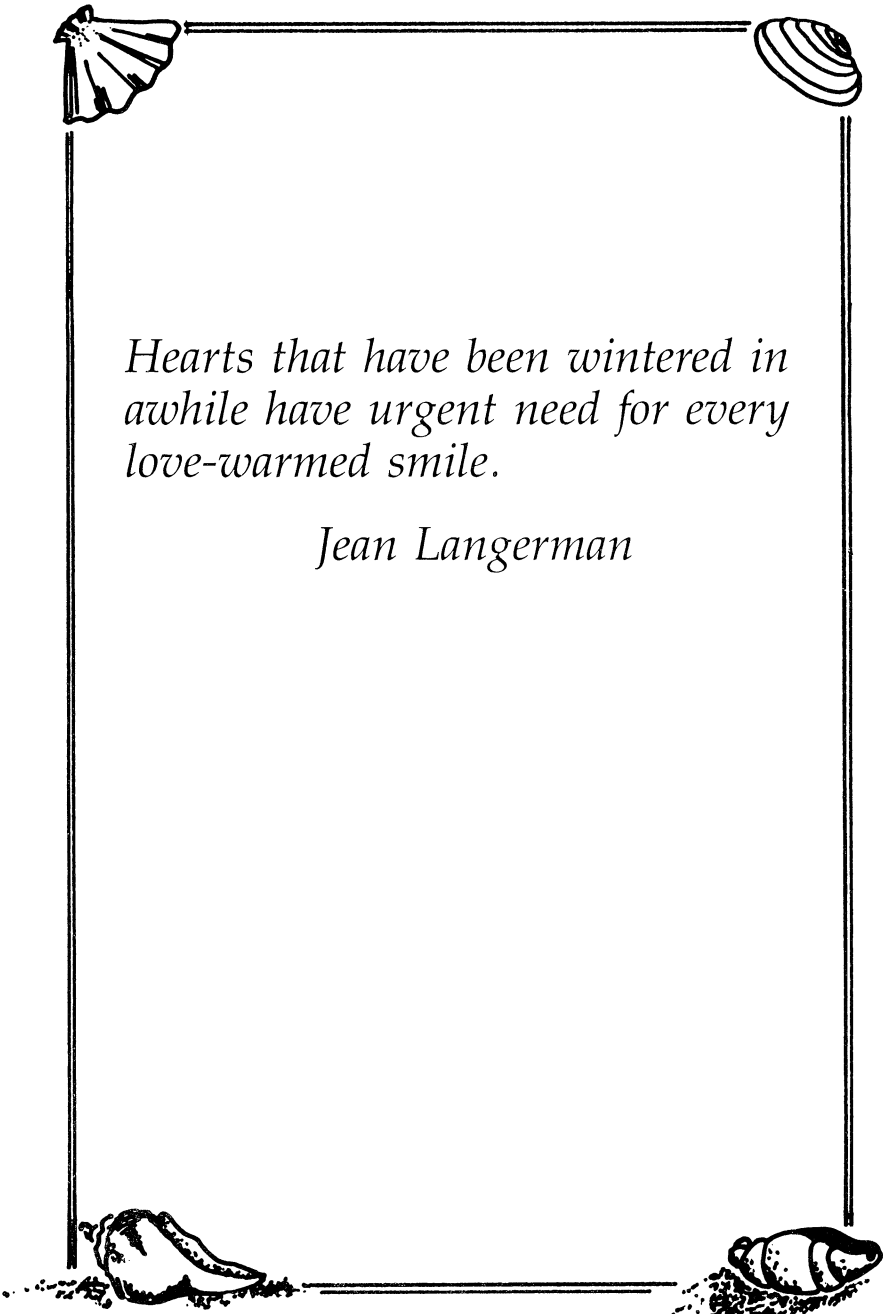
No person is never unemployed because, we work for ourselves, for God, and to serve others. As home continually reappears in different forms, so employment appears in different forms also. The work I need also needs me. I cannot fail to discern it.

Other people are shaken by sudden, untoward events. By comforting them, I lose my sense of alarm and any fear I may have of them or what they may think.

And so on. You get the idea. For every negative, whimpering little suggestion, there is a good, sound spine-straightening idea to stand up to it. If you've ever sat alone in a huge cavern, you know it takes some courage to raise up your voice and sing. But once you get started, your voice rapidly gathers volume and begins to echo and make quite a racket. So do that. Sing out with all your might. That's how you do in the dragons. They can't stand the noise.

Adversity causes some men to break,
others to break records.

William A. Ward



*Hearts that have been wintered in
a while have urgent need for every
love-warmed smile.*

Jean Langerman

From His and Hers To Ours

It's a strange thing that marriages between managers and their spouses are so often long-lasting and satisfying. You wouldn't think they would be with so much against them.

The manager devotes most of his or her emotional energies to work and is sometimes out-of-sorts at home from job pressures. Too many evenings are spent away from home and most of the family business is left to the spouse. From time to time, the whole family is uprooted in the quest for a better position.

Families struggle to make homes in new communities. They endure reading about the manager in the local paper and having people forever notice what they do and say. They patiently piece together parts of careers as they move from place to place.

Yet, it is not by chance that you constantly come across partners of 30 years who seek each other out and hold hands and give signs of imperishable devotion. How come? Could it be that the very experience of counting on each other, leaning on each other, sustaining each other builds into these marriages strength that couples in less rigorous roles do not find? If so, the time of firing, of greatest travail, for the manager and partner are also golden moments for them to learn how much they mean to each other.

The manager and spouse are best friends.

The following is typical of what many "manager couples" feel.

State of the Union Message

July 10, 1982—Thirty-four years after July 10, 1948

On their thirty-fourth anniversary, Mr. and Mrs. J. got up, had breakfast, and went about the business of the day.

When you've been married 34 years and love each other, the rockets don't flash the news in the sky, but your fondness for each other throbs in the bloodstream; your need for each other is layered in the marrow of the bones; and your gratitude for each other lifts the lungs with the breath's inspiration. You could as soon walk out of your flesh and bones as leave each other out of mind, heart or soul on this day or any other.

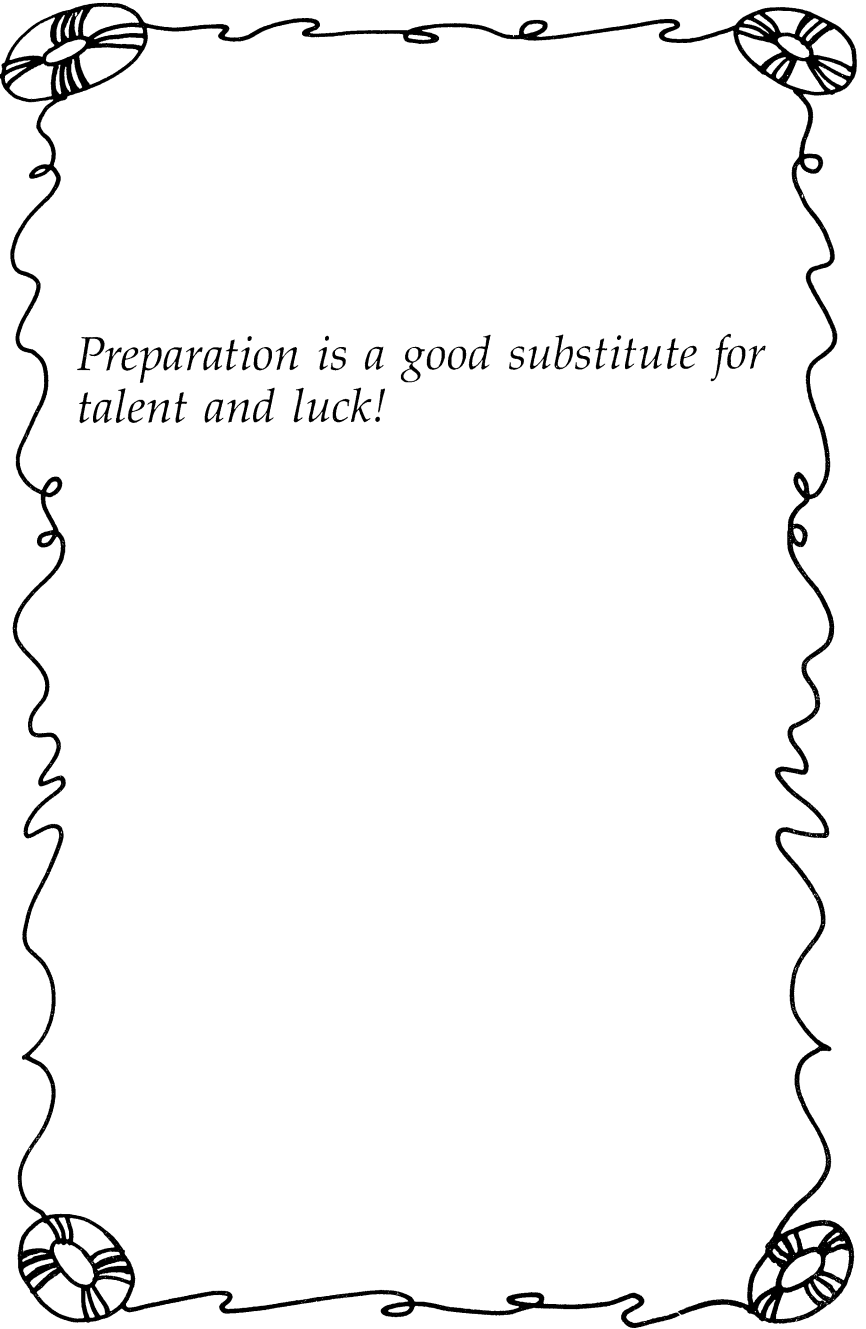
Yet, you know that you are still growing up, and can look back and measure some progress. Two sturdy personalities don't tongue and groove without some planing down of the rough surfaces.

One thing can be said of our journey. We tried to let each other be free. There was no envy or jealousy. We were persistent. We always forgave. We had high hopes and some noble ideals. But, even then, we wouldn't have made it without a lot of help from God.

And what is it that makes us particularly gratified? It would be this marriage, and it would be measured by the affection and respect of our friends, our families, the wonderful people who have been our companions along the way.

Our hearts are full. A couple of kids went adventuring together, and they didn't forget it was a love affair.

Practical Ideas for Beachcombers



Preparation is a good substitute for talent and luck!

Planning Ahead for Your Time on the Beach

Frank and Fran Aleshire

Good managers know that smooth running operations come not from happenstance but from plenty of planning and rehearsal. So while you are sailing bouyantly over a peaceful sea, you might think about ways to prepare yourself for the time you might find yourself in need.

Here are some practical steps managers and spouses can take to assure themselves of independence should their connection with any particular local government be severed suddenly:

1. *Six months pay, in savings or in investments convertible to cash.* The average time on the beach between local governments is six months. What peace of mind to know that you can hold out that long, even without severance pay and without additional resources! The advantage is obvious.
2. *Supplemental, non-government based insurance.* It can be quite a shock, particularly to managers with young families, to be suddenly without all those comforting fringe benefits that come with the job, such as a health plan and insurance. Managers should have some insurance that is independent of the job. ICMA's insurance and deferred compensation plans are good possibilities.

ICMA currently offers group life, long-term disability, and accident insurance at economical group rates. Other forms of insurance and personal protection will be available in the future. The ICMA Retirement Corporation has the first truly "portable" deferred compensation plan that is available to local government administrators. Retirement Corporation members have a choice of a wide range of investment options, tax deferment until after

retirement, and the chance to continue building retirement income even with job changes.

3. *An updated job file.* Never allow yourself to drift completely out of the job market. Continue to accumulate references. Update your resume every year. Keep abreast of what is happening in the field. See the resources section for helpful references.

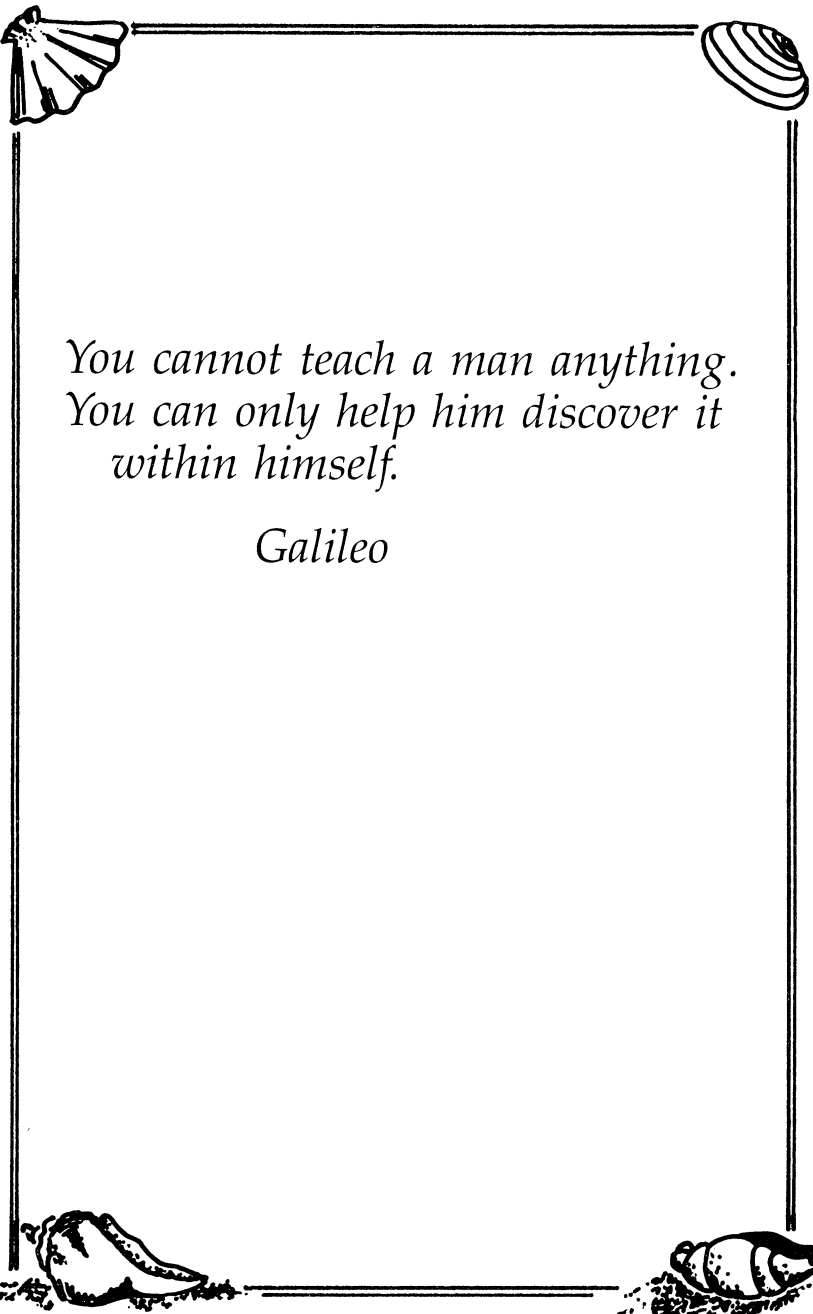
Another thought is to become acquainted with job search consultants. Your morale will improve when you realize how difficult it is for them to find well-qualified applicants. ICMA can provide leads on places to contact.

4. *An established relationship with a university or other professional training center.* Being on the beach gives the manager breathing space to cultivate other talents and to get perspective on his or her career. If you are already teaching a class or if you have formed a relationship with a university, often you can move into a fuller commitment to teaching while you are waiting for the right manager job to open up. The university atmosphere may encourage you to do some writing, lecturing, or consulting, areas you might never have explored without this gift of time.
5. *Relationships with other local government managers and spouses.* The calls that will come the soonest and that will mean the most to you will come from other managers and spouses. These are the people who understand your situation and who have the most comforting words to offer you. You can build a strong, supporting network if you will pay special attention to cultivating friendships among those in the profession. By widening and deepening contacts at conferences, by seeking friendships among managers near your community, by reaching out to managers when they need help, you will build a strong support system for your time of need.
6. *Relationship with ICMA.* The Association wants to help. Managers who are "on the beach" are considered in transition to another position. Membership is extended automatically for six months and dues can be deferred for up to a year. Call ICMA and let them know about your situation. Allow your name to be listed in the *ICMA Newsletter* as a manager "in transition" so you can receive the help and support you need from your colleagues.
7. *Alternate ways to earn a living.* If you've always been in the local government management profession and cannot imagine yourself in any other position, then your time on the beach will be especially frightening. The more options you have, though, the

greater your self-confidence. Alternate employment may emerge from your hobby, from your recreational activities, from your interest in investments, from your contacts with the private sector, or from your relationships with other levels of government. Being a local government manager is just one of the many roles you play in life; but the role is too insecure to have it be the *only* one.

8. *An advance understanding with your council about the terms of severance.* The concept of an employment agreement between managers and their councils has been the subject of controversy for years. But managers who have borne the one-sided impacts of severance are insisting on a better understanding with councils before they enter into their relationship. The key is to make sure that you will be provided with financial security for a minimum of six months. This may be in the form of minimum termination notice or severance pay. ICMA has a publication on drafting an employment agreement and can provide you with sample agreements and alternative language on fringe benefit agreements.

Since what you really want is to avoid the unpleasantness of forced separation, you might consider these additional precautions: 1) request the commitment of the council to annual evaluation of the manager's performance with an opportunity for two-way exchange of perceptions (ICMA can help with examples of evaluation processes other managers are using); 2) gain the agreement of the council to annual team-building sessions with council and manager. In this profession, in these times, it is what the manager *doesn't know* that hurts. Reality checking through open exchange of perceptions is essential to survival.



*You cannot teach a man anything.
You can only help him discover it
within himself.*

Galileo

Help!

It's OK to Get Some

Don Borut
Associate Director, ICMA

Several years ago a city manager I have known for a decade told me that his council, which was at best ambiguous in its support, had finally asked him to leave. A reasonable severance arrangement was worked out that was in the best interests of both the community and the manager. Indeed, after the decision, the manager said for the first time in memory he could approach the job with some joy. However, in follow-up discussions, my friend said he was experiencing a range of feelings and tensions he had not expected: he was having trouble sleeping, he was worried about how he would handle his next job, he had doubts about his effectiveness as a manager, and he was even questioning his own self-worth. I suggested that he might find it useful to talk with a professional counselor, and I offered him the names of several psychologists and psychiatrists in his area.

The manager did seek professional help from one of these references. In his case, the counseling proved valuable, and he was able to work through the negative suggestions and to recognize that his feelings were not a reflection of his lack of worth, manliness, or talent as a professional.

I offer this story as a positive example of how, at a time of crisis, professional support can be of valuable assistance. I readily admit that it is a rare example. Most of us are not inclined to seek help, particularly those of us who have been in the business for some time and who believe that we should be the ones to provide personal help, not receive it.

The men and women who enter local government management and aspire to reach the top are, from my observation, highly motivated and interested in bringing change. In most cases they see

themselves in positions of control: control of program development, control of people in the work environment, and, most important, control of their own emotions. Managers appear to be individuals who want to help and direct, but who have enormous difficulty *being* helped. They do not want to be dependent, and they see dependency as a sign of weakness, as lack of professional competence.

Over the past several years, as I have talked to managers who have either lost their jobs or who have gone through some other professional trauma, one of the most striking things I have found is that most of us (and I include myself) have “worst case” fantasies that in no way resemble reality. When we’re down or feeling depressed, we project onto others our own negative self-images, images that are not truly reflective of how others feel about us.

During crises, managers tend to look inward and to worry about their self-worth. They imagine that they have just been lucky in their careers and now their luck has run out. They speculate that no community would hire a manager who has been fired. They think they are too young, too old, graduated from the wrong college, live in the wrong part of the country, and on and on. Often, the only one with whom they can speak is their spouse, and in some cases their own negative feelings are projected against their spouses. If they do not get the support they want, they can end up hurting the persons closest to them without realizing it.

Over the years, through conference programs on professional growth, stress, and personal development, speakers such as Drs. Dave Morrison, Layne Longfellow, and Herb Klemi have made us intellectually aware that we have feelings we may not be able to control. *But*—this is a long way from recognizing some of these feelings in ourselves and being willing to talk about them with a professional.

Managers recognize the need and their professional responsibility to hire consultants to deal with technical and managerial issues that confront their communities. An increasing number of managers recognize the value of providing counseling to members of the staff about such issues as alcoholism and family trauma. But seeking and accepting counseling for ourselves is something else. We are supposed to be strong, not weak; helpful, not dependent. Seeking personal help is valuable for others, we think, but not for those of us who are bosses, managers.

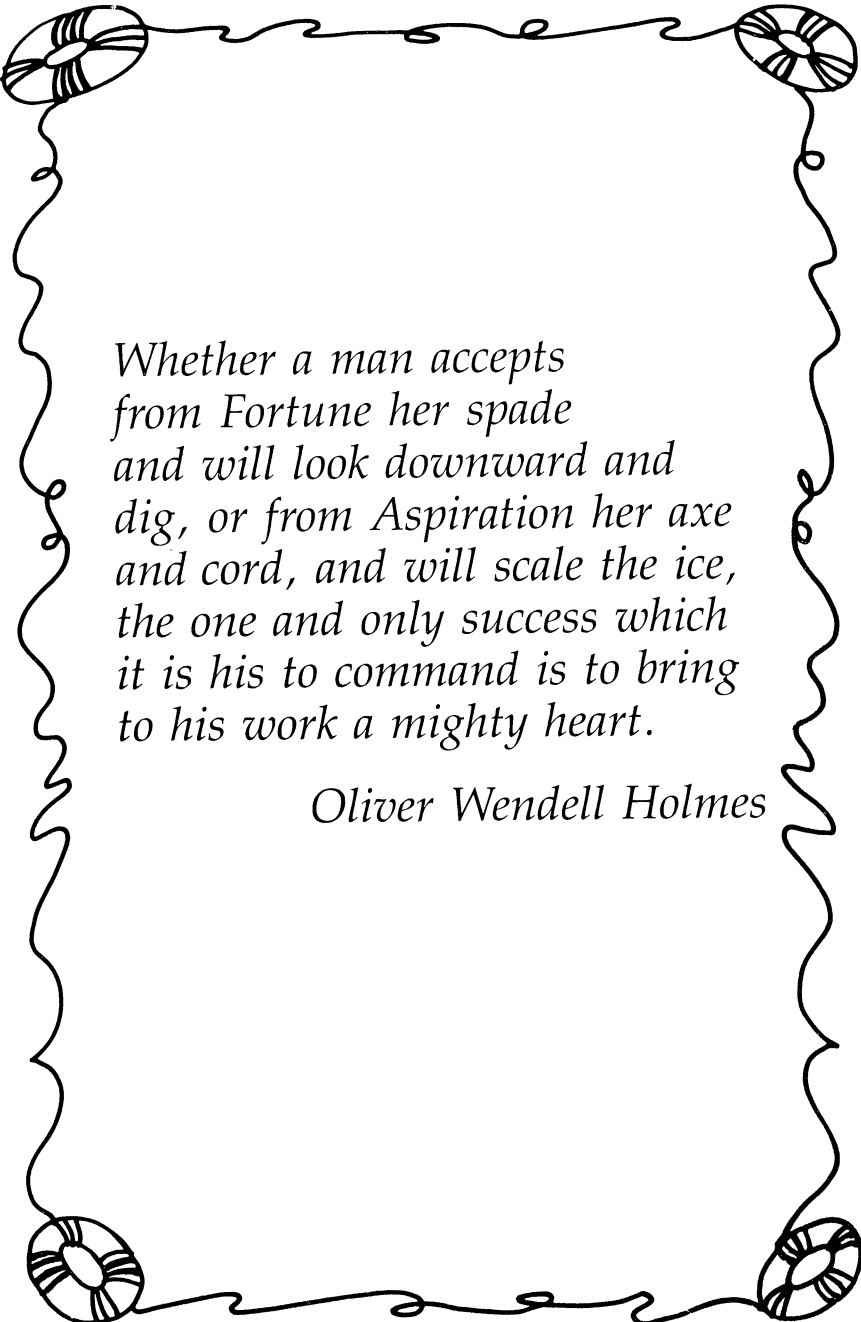
For each example I can identify of managers who sought help when they were in need, I can cite an equal number who quickly

rejected the offer of assistance. In one case, the manager was quite explicit about why he was turning down professional counsel: others might find out he was seeing a psychiatrist, and that would hurt his image as a manager.

Those who have benefited from some form of crisis counseling have done so in spite of the strong inclination to avoid professional help. Indeed, given the value system of managers, I would argue that it is an indication of strength when a person is able to recognize need and seek assistance during an especially tough time.

Personally, I am disposed towards using and encouraging others to use professional counseling. My oldest and closest friend became a psychiatrist. During our graduate years, we talked frequently about how the management profession could benefit from his profession. Based upon those discussions, the experience I personally had at the Menninger program, the comments of managers who have participated in the Menninger program or who worked with Dave Morrison and others, I am convinced that even managers who spend their lives providing strength and assistance to others will at some time find themselves in need of support.

Through ICMA I have been able to share the idea that seeking assistance is okay. In a number of instances where individuals have been willing but unsure how to identify the right professional counselor, we've come up with suggestions. Managers do not always follow through. Some do and some don't, but at least they have another option of how to get through a hard time. We at ICMA feel it is essential to promote the idea that seeking assistance during periods of crisis is not a reflection of weakness and incompetence, but rather a wise recognition of need and a sign of strength.



*Whether a man accepts
from Fortune her spade
and will look downward and
dig, or from Aspiration her axe
and cord, and will scale the ice,
the one and only success which
it is his to command is to bring
to his work a mighty heart.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Resources

While most of this publication has provided you with the shared thoughts and experiences of managers and their spouses who have gone through the trauma of a firing, this chapter becomes more pragmatic. There are many resources—whether they are ICMA publications, professional help, or inspirational and challenging readings—for dealing with any kind of career crisis that you may want to use.

The following lists of resources will, it is hoped, provide you with a wide range of assistance and support.

ICMA Resources

"Personal Crisis." *PM Magazine*, May/June 1983. How managers and spouses cope with the stresses of dismissal, a move, or an attack by the news media.

"Career in Crisis." *PM Magazine*, February 1979. What every manager should know about being fired and the merits of leaving . . . for awhile.

Council-Manager Form of Government

"Responsive Local Government Package." Revised 1980. Selection of articles, brochures, and monographs designed to give citizens an overview of the council-manager plan as well as specific examples of how the plan works.

"The Council-Manager Plan: Answers to Your Questions." Revised 1982. Brochures for citizens' groups, schools, and individuals. *Citizens Handbook on Retaining Council-Manager Government: How to Respond to Abandonment Referenda*. 1980. Contains information on

organizing an effective campaign to retain council-manager government, including examples of techniques and materials from successful anti-abandonment campaigns.

ICMA publishes articles periodically on the profession and form of government in *PM Magazine* and *The Municipal Year Book*. Every three or four years ICMA conducts a form of government survey that is published in *The Municipal Year Book* (the most recent survey is analyzed in the 1982 MYB).

If a community is facing an abandonment referendum, ICMA can provide the manager and citizens' groups with the materials listed above as well as helpful statistics on the form of government and up-to-date information on how other communities have waged successful campaigns to keep the council-manager form. In addition, ICMA puts the manager in touch with other managers who recently have been through such campaigns.

Council-Manager Relations

"Council-Manager Partnership." *PM Magazine*, July 1983. Perspectives on how managers can improve the council-manager relationship.

"Council Profile." *Baseline Data Report*, Vol 15, No. 5. Provides data on councilmember characteristics including sex, age, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and occupation. Also includes information on tenure and compensation.

Elected Officials Handbooks: Practical Aids for Busy Local Officials. 2nd Edition, 1982. Two Volumes. Updated resource on the roles and responsibilities of local elected officials. Provides basic information on the wide range of activities and issues facing local officials. Includes chapters on team building, manager evaluation, policy-making, and goal setting.

"The Political Manager." Occasional Paper, September 1982. A manager's thoughts on how and why professional administrators must use political skills to accomplish their goals and increase their effectiveness.

"Building the Municipal Leadership Team." *PM Magazine*, July 1979. Ways the managers can work with elected officials to improve their policymaking skills.

Urban Policymaking: The Council-Manager Partnership. By Arthur W. Bromage, 1970. Stresses the teamwork required by urban policy makers.

Handbook for Councilmembers in Council-Manager Cities. By National

Municipal League, 1964. Written for new councilmembers.

ICMA can provide ideas on council-manager evaluation processes as well as sample evaluation forms and contract clauses requiring annual performance reviews.

Employment Agreements and Salary Issues

Compensation 83: An Annual Report on Local Government Executive Salaries and Fringe Benefits. ICMA, 1983. Designed to help local government executives understand and evaluate their personal compensation situations as well as those of their management teams. Provides comparative information on more than 30 executive fringe benefits including severance and deferred compensation. Also includes comparisons of public and private sector executive salaries and benefits.

"Manager Compensation." *PM Magazine*, October 1981. Compares public and private sector salaries and discusses employment agreements, retirement planning, and fringe benefits.

"Employment Agreements Between Managers and Governing Bodies." *MIS Report*, July 1981. Provides guidelines and a systematic procedure for the urban administrator and the governing body. (To be updated)

ICMA maintains a library of reference material on employment agreements and compensation concepts and can provide sample agreements and ideas on different approaches to fringe benefits.

Job Hunting

"Executive Search." *PM Magazine*, March 1983. Looks at managers' experiences with executive search firms and discusses what is involved in a good executive search process.

"Job Hunting Handbook for the Municipal Executive." By William E. Kirchoff, 1979. Written for chief administrators, assistants, and department heads. Covers career planning, interviews, job negotiations, employment agreements, and compensation issues.

Personal Finances

"Managing Your Money." *PM Magazine*, August 1982. Personal financial planning with an emphasis on the affordable move.

"Personal Finance." *PM Magazine*, March 1978. Concrete suggestions for ways managers can eliminate or minimize the special money problems of the profession.

For current information on publication prices, contact ICMA's

order department.

This is a basic list of the resources ICMA has to offer. There is a continuing effort to expand member services, so contact ICMA in the future to find out what other assistance is available.

Bibliography of Readings

Here are some references, suggested by the editors, for those who may find themselves on the beach. These are "shells among the pebbles on the beach" that the beachcomber will want to collect and examine.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Compensation and Self-Reliance* (essays).

The Bible, especially those references that have inspired you before.

Carl Jung, *Psychological Reflections*.

Excerpts from the writings of a psychologist acknowledged to have great insight into the nature of human beings. Jung writes about the relationships of men and women, youth and age, and the growth of people to maturity.

Anne Morrow Lindberg, *Gift from the Sea*.

Lindberg writes the thoughts that come to her as she vacations on an island. She ponders how a woman can meet all of life's demands and yet grow into completeness as a unique person.

R. Buckminster Fuller, *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*.

Fuller maintains that our pessimistic view of the world and of our future comes from our misconception of what constitutes wealth. Man's ability to discover the generalized principles that govern the universe will result in the successful flight of "Spaceship Earth." A book to open the mind to new possibilities.

Gail Sheehy, *Passages*.

Sheehy conducted more than 100 interviews to try to determine if the changes in adult life were in any way predictable. Gradually, patterns emerged, and she concluded that human growth and development is a life-long process. Understanding the passages we must navigate can be helpful for any "beachcomber," especially when crises of both inner and outer life happen to come together.

Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*.

A holocaust survivor's view of how one can meet the challenges of and find meaning in life.

Albert Schweitzer, *Reverence for Life*.

A collection of short sermons in which Schweitzer gives us his principles for living.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Human Energy*.

Writings from a theologian about the future of humans and the relationship of matter and spirit.

Arthur Young, *The Reflexive Universe*.

Contains a new theory of evolution that examines humans' growth, development, and freedom in relation to the evolution of the universe.

From the Professional Stream:

LeRoy Harlowe, *Without Fear or Favor and Servants of All*.

Counseling Resources

Personal counseling can be found in your own area through general practitioners or clergy. Some managers and their spouses may feel more comfortable about receiving help from outside their own community.

ICMA can be a helpful source. For years, ICMA has helped identify professional counseling resources for managers.

One source that can be utilized for direct assistance or for referral is:

Peggy Treadwell
Metropolitan Psychiatric Group
2020 K Street, N.W., Suite 810
Washington, D.C. 20006

Treadwell is a clinical social worker whose special interest is job loss and its effect on families, especially how spouses and children can best help.

Job-Hunting Resources

Job-hunting and resume resources include:

The Compleat Guide to Jobs in Planning and Public Administration by Daniel Lauber, Planning Communications, 200 South Boulevard, Evanston, IL, 60602, 312/328-8816.

This publication identifies more than 125 periodicals and job banks that list actual job openings. Also tells how to obtain more than 55 directories of city, county, regional, and state agencies and officials so you can contact them directly to learn of jobs that may not be advertised. (\$7.95 plus \$1 postage and handling charge, pre-paid.)

High Impact Resumes and Letters, by Ronald L. Krannich and

William J. Banis, Impact Publications, 4212 Gadwell Place, Virginia Beach, VA 23462, 144 pages, appendices, 1982.

Gives advice on how to develop individual job search skills, organize a successful job search campaign, select resume formats, draft and evaluate resumes, write job search letters, and much more. The price is \$8.95; for information, contact the publisher.

Check your bookstore and library for other publications that may assist you in determining your career path if you are considering a change. Among the publications and authors that may be of assistance is Richard Bolles, who has written, among other books, *What Color is Your Parachute?*

Personal Finances

Personal Financial Planning, a course from the American Management Association Extension Institute. The course includes information on investments, insurance, taxes, and personal financial planning. For information, contact AMA/EI, 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020, 212/903-8040.

Organizations

Consider organizations that will be able to offer you both personal and professional assistance. Among these are your state league of cities and ICMA state association.

Another valuable resource is the Menninger Foundation, which offers a wide range of professional assistance. They can be contacted at: P.O. Box 829, Topeka, KS, 66601, 913/234-9566.

Notes From Beachcombers

Notes From Beachcombers

The announcement of the publication of this book brought letters from many city managers from around the country. We did not have the space to publish every contribution in full length, so we have excerpted paragraphs from the letters and articles we received. Read and enjoy these lines from those who have been beached and learned how to take ship again.

* * *

I've always considered myself a somewhat private, strong individual with little need for outside support except perhaps for family and those few intimates. This experience demonstrates clearly to me that even the casual friend, acquaintance, or sometimes total strangers can help sustain one in trying times or moments of crisis. As time erodes the memories of crisis, I believe that the most enduring impression will be of the hundreds of people who took the time to write me, to call me, or to visit with me, expressing their messages of support and encouragement.

Dana A. Miller
Meriden, Connecticut

Do discuss freely the developing situation with all members of your family, including children. Do write a journal or make some notes (keep headlines, etc.)—it helps in a therapeutic fashion, but don't announce you're going to write a book (sounds like you are going to try to get even with *everybody*). Do go to ICMA state and international conferences. Do update your resume quickly, do get unbiased help on it, do get it nicely printed, and limit it to one page.

Do tighten purse strings immediately. Don't try to overdo the big, brave front. Do have that nest egg of U.S. Government bonds or other reserves.

Josh Mott

Georgetown, South Carolina

As one who left public administration as a result of my time "on the beach," I advise managers to expand their visions of what they might do with their lives. Take stock of what you are. Of course you are a city manager, but you are more than that. Develop your assets. The more flexible and skilled you are, the easier the transition, should you have to make it. Invest in yourself! Turn your assets into capital before they become rent receipts. Get an enterprise going, and use your managerial skills to make it a success.

Paul J. Pitt

Alpha-One Systems

Mission Viejo, California

My time on the beach gave me an opportunity to sample the world of small business. What an eye-opener! Never again, as a city manager, will I be so blind to the problems of the little guy at the bottom who is just trying to make a living. Some of my observations are:

1. Being a small businessperson is very difficult, especially in today's economic environment.
2. You never know how much real power you have as a city manager until you experience life in a small business.
3. Governments can cause nightmares, particularly when it comes to sales tax collections and in the areas of planning, zoning, and building regulation.
4. No matter what anyone says, it's impossible to run a government like a business.

My experiences on the beach were enlightening. I'm a better city manager because of what I learned and certainly am far more able to deal fairly with the private sector.

Ivan L. Widom

Nome, Alaska

My time on the beach taught me some truths worth sharing:

1. Your spouse is the most important person in your life at this crisis point. Love, support, and caring are very important. Sharing and working together make the experience much more meaningful than trying to do it all yourself.
2. You have a *value* and shouldn't sell yourself short. In your interviews, you'll come across differently to each of the many councilmembers. The best advice is to *be yourself* at all times. The fit has to be right for you as well as for them.
3. This is a great time to recharge the body. As a manager you were going at a fast clip—meetings, luncheons, pressure. Then, wow! All this activity stops and stops hard. But the old body likes slowing down, and we enjoyed the scenery for the first time in a long time. Golf, tennis, swimming, and walking the beach gave us hours of pleasure.
4. If you are in a community where everyone knows you, it seems all people want to talk about is your unemployed state. Don't get upset. It's just human nature. They are interested in your welfare. But clearing out of town occasionally, to break the spell, is a good idea.

We're back at work and very happy. The process took six months. Our advice—enjoy your time on the beach. It can be a rare and precious time!

Thomas M. Butch
Reedley, California

You are not alone. You have many friends, both professional and personal. Within reason, call them and use them for personal therapy and as contacts for your next professional move.

Try to keep active and involved. Read. Take a class. Participate in charitable or civic projects. Coach a little league team. You have skills and talents. Don't let them get rusty. Make up for lost time by spending time with your family.

This is a time for redirection, learning, growing, and loving. Accept and appreciate support from friends and colleagues. Rely on your family. Rely on and use your own abilities. When that occasion-

al “wave” sweeps over you, take a deep breath. You need not despair. There *is* something better ahead.

Tim Maupin

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Does being “on the beach” make the person a better manager? Yes and no. Yes, if the manager can correct some of the flaws that may have led to the firing. No, if the manager becomes afraid to do or say the things he or she knows are right. There are benefits not related to management skills. The experience may leave one with a greater humility, compassion, and resolution. It can bring families closer together. The important attitude is to emphasize the positive and not let the experience embitter you. Hemingway tells us in *A Farewell to Arms*, “The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places.” The beachcomber who goes to sea again will be stronger at the broken places.

Gerald Tuzinowski

Algonac, Michigan

Support of colleagues is so important. Bear in mind that you could be in the same position. Call and provide encouragement to those you know who are on the beach. Go out to lunch with someone who has lost his or her job. Ask your spouse to call and make a luncheon or shopping date with the affected spouse and provide a listening ear. Encourage those in transition to go to conferences and meetings. As a city manager, see if you have special jobs that the manager on the beach might be able to handle. A consulting job will help tide someone over until a new job comes along. Your organization will benefit from the expertise. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” is advice that can change the life of a colleague.

Mark Wollenweber

Huntington Woods, Michigan

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