

# The LightHeart Institute

Executive Coaching • Leadership Development • Management Consulting

## CASE STUDY:

### *The Day That Changed My Life*

*After a successful 30-year career with Xerox, Chuck was ready to do something different. Working with Executive Coach, Lisa Hill, the former Chief Engineer clarified his thinking and discovered the steps he would take next. It changed his life.*

#### **The Client's Situation**

In 1996 Chuck Winship was Manager of Engineering Operations for Xerox Corporation in Rochester, New York. He had worked for Xerox for 30 years; his last few spent on "Lakes," a "clean sheet" design under the guidance of John Elter. The organization developed a new paradigm in the copier industry and created a copier/printer/scanner and fax all in one. The DC 40 – 65, dubbed "the green machine" with "zero to landfill" capability, was designed with 98% recyclable parts. They also created a ninety-six percent reduction in spare parts. Boasting 40 – 75 prints per

minute it continues to get rave reviews.

#### **Chuck was Ready to Retire**

Chuck loved his work but was ready to retire. With thoughts of either running a combine from Texas to Canada, driving cross-country as a truck driver or running a Great Lakes freighter, he wasn't sure which direction he wanted to take. He enrolled in a course at Nazareth College, where he met instructor Lisa Hill. She was teaching a class on the Mind/Body Connection in response to the nationally acclaimed series "Healing and the Mind" with Bill Moyers.

They began a coaching relationship and met for one hour a week in Lisa's office. Lisa challenged Chuck's thinking, invited him to see different thoughts from various angles and taught him how to trust himself more, a leading factor in the choices he would make down the road.

#### **What We Did**

"One of the first things Lisa did," Chuck recalls, "is teach

me the difference between thoughts and feelings. Everyone has thoughts and everyone has feelings. We tend to combine them thinking they are the same thing. I knew I needed to figure out 'next steps' in my life and I wasn't sure which direction to take. I'm a type A personality. I wanted 'the facts ma'm, just the facts.' It was August and while I wanted to retire in May, I decided to stay at Xerox until the end of the year. Lisa suggested I go on a 'Medicine Walk'." "What's a Medicine Walk?" I queried. "It's a day's journey that begins at sunrise and occurs in a natural setting. Its purpose is to mirror back to you information that will help you decipher your inherent gifts and future life direction." I was curious. Lisa continued, "Go to a park or forest – a place that feels comfortable; show up before dawn; bring a jug of water, your journal and a pen; leave your watch and other electronic devices at home."

#### ***The Perfect Place for an Adventure***

“The month before, my wife and I, and some friends, had been touring the Erie Canal and came upon an area of ‘old growth forest.’ I thought at the time that would be a perfect place for such an adventure.

The day came and I entered the forest. The first thing my eyes landed on was a dead cat in the middle of the path. I then walked through a meadow of golden rod and came upon the nicest maple woods I’ve ever seen. They were on a slope facing east.

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***All of a sudden the words came to me...***

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With my engineering background I decided to first walk the perimeter, then toward the center. I stopped, wrote in my journal and then got pissed off because I didn’t have my watch. I decided to walk around some more and found an old pair of boot soles. I tried them on. They fit perfectly. For some reason, I decided to keep them on in the woods. Another path led me to a ten by ten cabin and I walked right in as if it were my home. I sat down to write in my journal again. All of a sudden the words came to me:

*‘Go to Cornell and get your degree.’ I couldn’t believe it!*

I was in ecstasy. I had the answer right in front of me. I

knew it was right. Dusk fell and my feet were flying. I soared as I left the forest knowing what my ‘next step’ would be. Just before I left a particular bird flew by very close – the first bird I had seen all day.

Later in reflection I realized a cat has nine lives. I was just about to start another life. That’s why I saw the dead cat. At the cabin I had found my home. I was home. My new dream was beginning. I believe the boot soles let me know the work I was doing included ‘Soulwork.’ My mother, who had passed away the year before, was very close to nature. It sounds kind of crazy – but I knew the bird represented her. It was as if she was saying to me ‘this is right Chuck’.”

## **The Results**

“The following semester I enrolled in Cornell University. I got my second Master’s Degree in Natural Resources and decided my mission would be to produce the best pure maple syrup on the East Coast. In the spring of 1998 Sugarbush Hollow, LLP was born and today we produce maple syrup, maple cream and maple sugar distributing throughout Upstate New York and shipping anywhere. I work part time for Cornell and I am working on projects ***I would pay them to allow me to do.*** Instead, they are paying me. I’m currently researching

property - looking for 20 to 40 acres of sugar maple trees - to move our operation. I am also in the process of designing a community center around the notion of a sugarbush where people connect. I want to invite underprivileged children to come and learn about farming, gardening and sugar shacks.

This is the result of my work with Lisa and the investment of one day that changed my life. Over the course of our work together she provided the necessary tools to allow me to reinvent my life and achieve a level of accomplishment far beyond what I thought I was capable of achieving.”

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### ***The LightHeart Institute***

*The LightHeart Institute is a Leadership Development, Executive Coaching and Management Consulting firm. Founded in 1987 by Lisa Hill DiFusco, the firm works with business leaders increasing their capacity for leadership driving more productive and profitable organizations.*

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