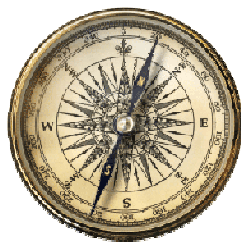


## Have We Lost Our Moral Compass?

Would I be overstating it if I went out on a limb and made the bold assertion that we have lost our moral compass? And as a part of that observation say that we have been holding up the wrong people as our heroes and role models for far too long! And it only seems to be getting worse.



As a population in North America we are losing our ability to discern the difference between right and wrong, fair or unfair, just or unjust and be willing to take a stand and declare ourselves.

### **Traditional morality is our sense of what is right or wrong, fair or unfair, just or unjust.**

To go along with this it is also my contention that a hero or role model must be a disciplined person, meaning that he/she should be prepared to take responsibility for their lives, always tell themselves and therefore others the truth and as much as possible lead a balanced life which among other things includes having integrity, courage, charity, compassion, an ability to forgive and a willingness to delay gratification.

Beyond what I believe are some of the characteristics of a hero are a number of others:

- A man/woman admired for his/her achievements and noble qualities; one who shows great courage,
- Wisdom and fortitude to do what is right,
- Possessing and displaying the highest level of charity, selfless dedication and a willingness to put others first while seeking no attention for him/herself.

A role model is considered to be a person who serves as a model in a particular behavioral or social role for another person to emulate. A person who is unusually effective or inspiring in some social role, job, etc. and so serves as a model for others, in fact very similar or synonymous with a hero.



There is no better example to reinforce my assertion than Tiger Woods who many have held up as a hero and role model. Up until very recently many among us stood in awe of the golfer and only wished that we could be like him. He transcended the game. The qualities that he brought to the game of golf translated into success beyond anyone's wildest imaginings. But we

made the mistake or the quantum leap of concluding that he must also be a remarkable man, husband and father.

Well that bubble burst didn't it! Clearly what we have come to know is that Tiger Woods is a **man-child** who completely lacks traditional morality as defined here. As he was growing up somewhere along the fairway he got his wires crossed and it will take a lot more than an electrician to untangle them! As a matter of fact, I am not even sure 'Bagger Vance' could help him? He has no sense of right or wrong, fair or unfair, rather in fact has more of a sense of entitlement, a feeling of being above it all, omnipotent even. He has not taken responsibility for his behavior and in particular has not been telling himself the truth. He has shown repeatedly a complete lack of integrity and little if any compassion for his family, the game of golf, golf fans everywhere and the sponsors who have paid him millions of dollars. This man-child has no discipline in the way he conducts his personal life. The worlds greatest golfer, no question, but a hero or role model as a man, husband, father, **NOT EVEN CLOSE!**

There are countless examples of men and women similar to Tiger Woods throughout the sport and entertainment world, men and women who many unfortunately have and/or continue to hold up as role models, even heroes just because they are



accomplished professional athletes or entertainers.

When will we come to understand that heroes and role models are not by definition professional athletes or entertainers? Oh unquestionably some of these individuals are heroes and legitimate role models but not because they are professional athletes or entertainers.



To make matters worse television networks have gone to cheap television and created a monster in the form of reality TV. The tall foreheads that are responsible for programming at the networks determined that there would be a market for this type of 'trash' television and what is so incredibly frightening is that they were right. There are so many so called reality television shows on now that it is difficult to keep track of them. People are sitting down in front of their television sets everywhere, apparently watching and after a while accepted that this is 'reality,' the way people live or should be living. It has gotten so bad that we even have individuals and families staging outlandish stunts in the hopes of being discovered and offered their own 15 minutes of fame in a reality TV show.



### So What Has Happened Here?

We have allowed three things in particular to happen that have contributed to the lose of our moral compass.

The gradual decline of mainstream religion in North America is one. There are many reasons for this and someone could write a big book on the subject. The point that I want to make is that whatever your beliefs may or may not be, and whatever your reasons are for attending or not attending church or synagogue, one thing that I am sure most of us can agree on is that along the way if nothing else these organized religions have given us a moral code or moral compass to guide our lives, our behaviours, that has stood us well and has stood the test of time.

Some may argue but others would agree that many of the characteristics we attach to heroes and role models are central to the values and beliefs put forth by the various religious denominations.

Secondly, the family as we once knew it has changed considerably and I certainly do not believe for the better. Quite simply the family is suffering from **profound neglect**. And the

primary reason for this can be pretty much summed up and found in this quote by author and psychologist James Hillman:

"I think we are miserable partly because we have only one god and that's economics. Economics is a slave driver. No one has free time; no one has any leisure. The whole culture is under terrible pressure and fraught with worry. It's hard to get out of that box. That's the dominant situation all over the world." *James Hillman*

Unfortunately with the gradual decline of religion and family it has become increasingly difficult to find a standard or a code of conduct to live by, something or someone to measure ourselves against, a moral compass if you would, a person whose behaviour and example can guide us in living our lives in compassionate, fruitful, and productive ways.

And finally, technology continues to fuel our disconnect from the very essence of who we are emotionally and spiritually. Television, computers, Blackberries, Facebook, Twitter, the list grows.

It is no wonder that our young people and a surprising number of our older people are enamored by those found in the sport and entertainment pages of our papers and magazines, not to mention those that we see, hear and read about on television and on our computers.





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COACHING POINT

It is becoming abundantly clear that a growing and sizable portion of the population looks to sport and entertainment for their heroes and role models, their moral compass...and that is frightening.

### What to Do?

In the popular song Hero, there are the words; *"a hero lies in each and every one of us."* The real heroes and role models today are yes, you guessed it, everyday men and women; grandfathers and grandmothers, moms and dads, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, those who get up every day; shower, brush their teeth, comb their hair and head out the door knowing that life can be difficult even at the best of times but instead of shrinking back in defeat muster the emotional and spiritual strength to go on and make a life for themselves and for those they love and cherish.

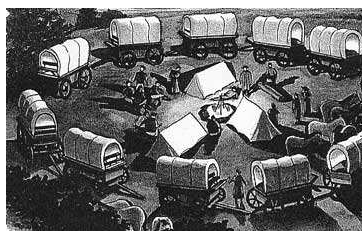
**It's funny but you never see any of these people featured in People magazine, bit of a contradiction, don't you think!**

Of the groups mentioned above parents must be particularly singled out for their role. For the most part I believe that we are a product of our first family experiences. It is primarily our parents who we look to for the support and guidance we need to grow up morally. It is here that we are supposed to develop our moral compass, our moral code of conduct. And consciously or unconsciously we

hold our parents up as our role models or heroes to show us the way. They should be the ones to emulate the kind of behaviour most associated with traditional morality. If they are not there, or worse, are poor role models, then who?

### Are You a Parent?

Most of us have come from at the very least mildly dysfunctional families and that generally means we are somewhat neurotic in our behaviour, which loosely translated means that some days we feel pretty good about ourselves and others days not so much. A good thing that often comes out of that level of self-acceptance and behaviour is a continuous striving to do better. The important thing here however is to be aware of the limited amount of time we all have and accordingly strategically prioritize it.



If you agree that traditional religion and family have declined, and with what James Hillman has to say about economics being a slave driver than maybe it's time to circle the wagons and take back your responsibilities as heroes and role models, if not collectively than individually and strategically carve out the necessary time to do the job that you signed on

for when you made the decision to have children.

In doing this you must either get back in touch with your life's purpose or for the first time find it! And you better hope that somewhere in its definition the word children pops up?

Let me sum up by telling a little story. On a recent Sunday I found myself walking in the Polo Park Shopping Center. There were many young families there on that day but I happened to notice one family in particular as they approached me; a mom, dad and their little girl no more than two feet tall, who was walking in between them holding her mothers hand. As I watched, the little girl looked up at her dad, reached up and took his hand, and as she did this a beautiful smile of contentment appeared on her face. All was right in her world, her heroes were by her side.

The nuclear family was once the essential moral and ethical unit of society, we need to bring it back.

"We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that she is someone today." *Author unknown*



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## **My New Years Wish For You**

By: Victoria Deobald  
Youth Speaker  
Success Strategies for  
Teens  
Inspiring a Happy  
Successful Life



As the New Year approaches most people start scrambling to pick a New Year's Resolution. Perhaps there is a something you want to change; the amount of time you get to travel, a raise from work, being a little kinder or the most common one to lose some weight. Then there are some individuals that could care less about setting a resolution. They figure they have little time to do so after a busy holiday rush or perhaps don't believe in setting themselves up for a goal they know they will never stay committed to.

My wish for all of you scrambling to pick a New Year's Resolution and those of you that have been let down from previous years of "Resolution Setting" is to know that no goal will make you any better than you already are. Take this New Years to celebrate your beauty and take some time when it's convenient for you to appreciate all that you are up until this moment. You are truly magnificent. No other person on the planet can do the things you do, or be the person that you are every single moment of every day. Your amazing gifts, talents, strengths

and personality are never to be duplicated by any other person that walks this earth. The many people you come into contact with are so blessed to be touched by your presence and love everyday. Did you ever think of that?

Now you might be thinking that this sounds a bit over the top, however the truth is we are all way to hard on ourselves. We rarely take the time to sit back, accept, and appreciate all that we are. We often place our attention on the things we need to improve on, change, or remove. We often think focusing on the things we need to improve will make us better, yet it makes us feel uneasy about ourselves. I am a strong believer in where your attention goes energy flows. So if you focus on what your good at you'll get better and if you need to change a bad habit just replace it with something positive that you can give yourself credit for. If you are someone that may have past regrets, negative feelings about some of the things you have done remember this. There is goodness within each of us and letting go of those things will allow you to fully give your best self to the people around you starting right now. The more you share this side of you, the better you feel about who you are. Your past regrets will begin to subside.

So you're probably thinking how do I do this? Pick a day where you have some free time to sit by yourself to

simply reflect. Write down the things that make you the person you are? Some questions you may want to ask yourself are:

- What did I do today that made a positive impact in someone else's life?
- What am I good at? What do people tell me I am good at?
- How can I spend more time embracing my gifts and talents?
- Where do I focus my attention, is it on things that give me power or things that weaken me?
- Do I have a habit that needs to be replaced with something more positive?

You can also add whatever question you feel you need to answer, that will help you get to know and better appreciate yourself.

Here are some examples of responses to these questions?

### **What did I do to make a positive impact in someone else's life today?**

I smiled at a stranger who needed their spirit lifted. When I drove to work today, I stopped and let someone into my lane. I listened to someone that needed to be heard.

### **What do people tell me I am good at?**

People tell me I am good at leading, writing, listening,





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COACHING POINT

speaking, dancing, connecting to others or good with animals.

### **What do I know I am good at?**

I know I am good at communicating because I know when I speaking on the platform I can feel the connection from the audience. People also tell me after I speak that I have a gift.

I know I am good with animals because I know when I am around them they are drawn towards me. People with unfriendly pets tell me they don't usually approach people the way they do with me.

I know I am good building things because I helped build part of a friend's cottage. The owners and visitors that go to my friend's cottage ask who did the construction.

### **How I will spend more time on the things I am good at?**

In the next year I will take a class in public speaking to further develop my skills as a presenter.

This month I will build a shed for my back yard.

This week I will write a newsletter for my website.

In the summer I will join a writer's club to develop my non fiction writing skills.

Every day I will spend 20 minutes developing the things I am good at.

### **Habits I want to break and replace with something positive**

I have a habit of putting important tasks off for interruptions or distractions that take time away from activities I enjoy. I will work on controlling my focus so that I can attend to the things I love to do each day such as writing.

If you have a habit of smoking you could replace your habit with exercise, which brings you feelings of good health and strength.

Once you answer these questions you will have a better appreciate for who you are and the good things that you do. This list will remind you that you are appreciated and that you're good already.

When you feel good about who you are and believe in the power of your life this I call "True Success."

Living a happy successful life aligned with your heart and spirit is my wish for you in 2010.

Victoria Deobald is a Youth Speaker. She speaks on the topic of Success- at high schools, leadership conferences, assemblies and workshops.

Victoria takes pleasure in speaking to our Youth because she enjoys sharing her insights and strategies with them. Victoria believes our youth have more challenges to face than at any other time in history. She understands the pressures young people face today, and hopes that the insights and strategies she shares with them will help them create success in their own life.

In 2006 Victoria spoke at a National Speakers Conference the (Canadian Association of Professional Speakers) in Vancouver to 300 professional speakers inspiring them

To reach out to our youth, Victoria is also an active member in Toastmasters and this year serves as the Area 11 governor responsible for the success of 5 Toastmasters clubs in Winnipeg.

