

The Gift of Experience - My Ocean Challenge Leadership Program

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The Gift of Experience

The Asaro ethnic group in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea has a beautiful saying: "Knowledge is only a rumor until it lives in the muscle." Having knowledge about something is a great start but moving that knowledge into practice is when it comes alive. We can move what we are learning from our heads to our hearts through our hands with practice and experience.

During high school, I had struggled enormously with science classes. I could

memorize the material for tests, but I couldn't really understand it or explain it. Deep inside, I felt that I wasn't smart enough—at least not in this area. I felt like a fraud—pretending to know something that I didn't.

I had a profound experience when I was 29 years old, having recently graduated from two years of seminary. I participated in an Ocean Challenge leadership program that involved fishing on the ocean in a 28-foot boat using handlines to catch tuna. After an initial training period, I became a boat captain.

The first thing I had to do was to repair the engine which wasn't working after being in storage over the winter. Since the engine needs to be in the ocean to start it, we attached a piece of plywood to the back end of the boat and labored to fix the engine without falling in.

Through this experience of collaborating with a female mechanic, I discovered that I wasn't dumb; I just needed the hands-on opportunity to move knowledge into practical experience. Learning about the roles that spark plugs and pistons play in bringing the engine to life was so liberating. That summer, I gained a great deal of confidence and I caught an 800 pound tuna with my crew--pictured above.

In my book, "[7 Gifts to Give Your Child--Parenting That Will Touch Their Future](#)," I have included a chapter on ***The Gift of Experience*** because this is an essential part of our parenting role—giving our children the experiences of doing activities together as a family (creating memories) as well as opportunities to discovery, explore and experience moving knowledge into the heart, the body, and the present.

The Gift of Experience covers many different areas. There are **experiences together as a family**—exploring or camping in nature, going on a memorable trip, or looking at creating special experiences around birthdays and other

holidays.

Our children need **community experiences**, activities, and organizations that support healthy challenges and collaboration—hiking clubs, sports, 4-H programs, choir, band, church youth groups, Big Brother-Big Sister programs, and more. For my boys, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts provided amazing adventures that they could participate in together with their friends. They learned how to camp overnight in the snow, safely use a bow and arrow, as well as load and shoot a BB gun and shotgun.

As our children approach the teen years, we might take some advice from Dr. Tim Elmore, international speaker, and best-selling author. He states that he has found **six experiences** that help **foster authentic maturity** as youth grow towards adulthood. They include supporting them to:

- Do something scary—out of their comfort zone
- Meet someone influential—growth opportunities to explore future career possibilities
- Travel someplace different—travel is an education in itself
- Chase a meaningful goal—information is meaningful as it becomes application
- Wait and work for something you want—delayed gratification
- Practice a new habit—may be tied to accountability and new levels of responsibility in the family

If you are already a grandparent, think about what kind of experiences you would like to have together with your grandkids.

It has been said that one of the greatest legacies we leave our children and grandchildren is happy memories created by our experiences together. The best gifts are not things. In the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, “The purpose of

life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer, richer experiences.” Make experiences a part of your family traditions—start now so they don’t need to wait until 29 (or even older.)

For more information on my book, click here:

www.coachmyrna.org/7-gifts-to-give-your-child.html

To purchase my book on Amazon, click here:

tinyurl.com/7-Gifts-to-Give-Your-Child

If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: www.coachmyrna.org/ Find out more about Safe Conversations www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html.

