How Open Heart Surgery Became the Door to My Success

By: Dr. Mark Skovron (Part 1)



- [ ] I spent the entirety of my twenties and thirties working extremely hard to become successful.
- [ ] Can you, the reader, see the many potential flaws of the statement above?
- [ ] "Working hard," is a concept of the West, and in particular, the U.S., although it does exist in a few other places.
- [ ] "Becoming successful."
- [ ] Well simply, just WTF is that?
- [ ] Before the age of 30, I was earning over $150,000 a year - and that was in the 80's - bought a home over 100 years old, got it on the historical registry in Baltimore, had it totally refurbished, furnished it with valuable antiques, was driving a new Mercedes Benz, and sporting a Rolex.
- [ ] I had box seats to my favorite sport then, indoor soccer, traveled the country for work, wore expensive clothing and vacationed abroad. My suits were about $1,000 and my shoes were about $400. I never spent less than $150 on a freaking tie.
- [ ] I don't even like ties! I hate ties! Ties are to most men like pantyhose is to most women.
- [ ] Was I successful? What do you think? Probably. In some ways. There were perks. I did enjoy my toys.
- [ ] Was I happy? No. I was addicted to chasing someone else's idea. I had an unhealthy obsession to prove something - oh yeah, that "I could be successful." So, WAS THIS SUCCESS?
- [ ] There is no definitive answer. Parts of it, probably.
- [ ] But for me, overall, no.
- [ ] Success, through a chain of wonderful, miraculous and metaphysical events revealed that although my ACCOMPLISHMENTS were respectful enough, and I had benefited greatly from them, as did the many non-profits I supported, something was missing...

- [ ] In my mid thirties, I suddenly collapsed while on vacation. It was Memorial Day, and I was at the Double Tree Hotel in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.
- [ ] I had just taken my shower in the morning and was packing to get ready to go home to Tampa, when I fell onto the couch. 911 was called. In a daze of coming in and out of consciousness, I could hear voices. Paramedics calling numbers and information. "Clear!" one of them shouted.
- [ ] After waking up in a beach band-aid station, more than the hospital they called themselves, I was informed that testing revealed that I had all but completely blown out the mitral valve of my heart. No, I was not abusing drugs. It just happens sometimes. Just lucky, I guess...
- [ ] The memories came rushing in. "Oh yeah, I had been diagnosed with a heart murmur at birth; I was informed in my teens," I told the doctor. "My mother said that I had outgrown it, like millions of others." Well evi-freaking-dentally not!
- [ ] I was rushed to Tampa Bay General Hospital, a major surgical center.
- [ ] The surgeon introduced himself as Dr. Angel. You've got to be kidding me, right? Get-Out-Of-Here. Seriously though, that is his name, and he was a warm and compassionate man. He's still alive tinkering around inside the chests of people in Tampa.
- [ ] "You need emergency and immediate open heart surgery to repair or replace your mitral valve. I won't know until I get inside," he said. "The valve, should I replace it, will either be mechanical or a pigs valve, I'll let you know when you wake up."
- [ ] Thoughts appeared. WHAT? Chest saws? Rib spreaders? A pigs what? I do like bacon...
- [ ] "Can you do it microscopically," I asked.
- [ ] "No. I need full access to everything in case things go a different direction. But we need to get you into the OR."
- [ ] A different direction is going left instead of right at a stoplight, not you being inside my chest cavity with a bunch of other folks while I take a nap! Different direction my ass.
- [ ] A lot more language that blended together like a fruit smoothie sounded like I was on the set of television show...
- [ ] Real success was on it's way however. (Continued in Part Two)
- [ ] Have a Great Memorial Day weekend!

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