



It's Different, and that is a Good Thing!

by Joe Gandolfo

My family and I were fortunate to be able to take a vacation over the great pond this summer. Our travels took us to London, England and to Scotland.

My wife Tonya, a veteran of such travels to these lands, led the way. Her mother having been born and raised in England, afforded Tonya the opportunity to spend many summers as a youth in England, Scotland and France, as well as a few trips over the pond during adulthood. My two boys and I were rookies on this trip and the three of us were very curious to explore these new lands and excited to follow the veteran.

We spent three days in London exploring that beautiful city – architecturally detailed buildings lined the streets and many people from various cultures walked the streets. We spent the remaining 7 days in an old world town named Dornoch, Scotland. A breath-taking city near the northeastern tip of Scotland nestled on the North Sea.

We immersed ourselves in the essence of Scottish culture – fish & chips, a marching bag-piped band, British links golf, a calmer pace to life, friendly “hellos” to strangers and heard colorful words such as “*cheers*”, “*jolly good*” and “*muck*”, as in “*mucked up*”. A true Scottish cultural experience.

I was amazed at what my eyes and mind where opened too (which I am thankful for, my only wish was that it happened much earlier in my life). I was more amazed by my boys who truly engaged this very new experience. Periodically, I asked each of my boys what they thought of this “*new land – Scotland*” and I received the same two-word response repeatedly “*it's different*”.

At the end of our vacation I asked again *the question* and received the same response “*it's different*”, but this time asked a follow-up question. “*Is different good or bad*” I probed and my boys both quickly responded in a chorus “*it's a good thing Dad*”. It was different and in this case different was a good thing!

No matter if we are young, old or somewhere in between, each day of our lives affords us the opportunity to experience “new lands” and to bring into our life “new good things”. Opportunities to change a behavior, to cherish more deeply a relationship, to start a new hobby or activity, to let go of something that just is not working for us, to look in the mirror and embrace our potential – the opportunities are abundant. To be a better student, a better parent, a better worker, a better boss, a better friend to others and to ourselves – does not require a trip over the great pond to shake us loose.

Doing things differently can be a challenge, scary at times and can take effort, but what is the alternative – stagnation, frustration, boredom, loss of hope and a mind-set that the way we are doing *IT* is the only way. We all get caught up in our routines and sometimes these routines become ruts.

Fortunately, daily opportunities are right there for us to give a smile, a hug, a kind word, a helping hand to others, or to turn inward and reconnect with our own goodness and potential and most of all embrace it! We do not have to travel great distances to have our eyes opened and our minds expanded. We only need to open and expand our heart and the distance to that is close, much closer than an eight hour plane ride.

Listen to Joe’s free daily podcast – ***Teen Success Radio*** – available on iTunes.
His new book ***The Greatest Teenage Myth in the World*** is now available @ www.JosephGandolfo.com or www.TheGreatestTeenageMythInTheWorld.com

Joe Gandolfo is on a mission to ***champion the greatest commodity in today’s world – our youth, teenagers, young adults and college students***, and to rally, strengthen and energize the adults – parents, educators, mental health professionals and organizations - who work with and care about our greatest commodity in the world.

Joe works as a ***professional speaker, success coach, seminar leader motivational counselor and author***. He brings 20 years experience working with youth, teen-agers, student-athletes, professional athletes, adults, parents, educators, public and private schools, organizations and associations.

His clients have included: *Georgia Tech Athletic Association, Rockdale County Schools, Cobb County Schools, Cobb Teen Leadership, YMCA, Childcare Resource Network, University of Clemson, University of West Georgia, PGA of America, Milwaukee Brewers, Coca-Cola, SouthCoast Hospitals, Owens-Corning and MPI Georgia Chapter.*

He has been an adjunct professor at Georgia Tech (1996-2000) and Georgia State (2005-06). He was on staff at the Homer Rice Center for Sports Performance (2000-07). He has had a private consulting practice since 1991.

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