

## **PUTTING THE *FUN* BACK IN *DYSFUNCTIONAL!***

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Several years ago, I had the privilege of working with the Million Dollar Round Table. As a member of that great organization, I have had intimate contact with them and have attended their meetings for years. Their meetings are said to be the best meetings held anywhere in the world. I had the privilege of being a Main Platform presenter back in 1989 along with fellow NSA Members W. Mitchell, CPAE and Brian Tracy, CPAE.

One of the projects in which I have been intimately involved with was a program that did research with the *Top of the Table* members. The *Top of the Table* are THE BEST of the best in MDRT. All these top performers make in excess of a million dollars per year. MDRT was interested in learning what made these folks tick... what made them *who* and *what* they are.

One of the most startling parts of the research was that a large number of these top producers came from dysfunctional environments, broken homes where drug abuse, alcohol or other addictions were prevalent. Most became caregivers early on in their lives. I suspect this is what caused most of them to consider a profession that directed much of its effort toward helping others.

Having been in the life insurance profession since 1974, I have two corporate offices and 18 branch offices in the state of Florida. We manage a clientele that consists of some 35,000 policyholders in 96 different cities throughout the state of Florida. I too have concluded that the best of our producers are those who came from environments that might be best classified as "*flawed.*" Again, it begs the question, *why does this profession's elite seem to come from such humble and soiled beginnings?*

It occurs to me that many of our top producers in many industries come from similar backgrounds. I never thought my own home to be *dysfunctional* in the conventional definition of the word. However, I did come out of an environment that could be defined as *non-traditional*. I had ten brothers and sisters. My parents were not alcoholics or abusive in any way, but lets face it, they had their hands full raising 11 children. My dad actually worked two jobs to support us. Neither was able to attend all our school functions; it was simply impossible to be in that many places at one time.

**They never saw me play an athletic event. They weren't able to be there when I won the South Carolina High School State Oratorical Contest. They weren't able to be there later in life either when I won the World Championship of Public Speaking for Toastmasters. By the time I got the CPAE *Speaker Hall of Fame* award, they were deceased. I'm not sure but I suspect that, in my own life, I've sought the honor offered by the platform as consolation for absence of applause at home.**

**I'm just not smart enough to know how "*on target*" I am here. All I know is this - the privilege of the leadership is an honor that we have that should not be abused.**

**On the other hand, our real strengths as leaders come from our ability share from within. The great speaker Christopher Haggerty, CPAE Speaker Hall of Fame, made the observation at an NSA meeting back in the eighties. "*The great strength of the speaker in the balance of this century lay in his ability to show his vulnerability.*" How profound.**

**I guess when you let people into your heart, it makes it easier for them to get into your mind.**

**Michael Aun, FIC, LUTCF, CSP, CPAE Speaker Hall of Fame is a businessman and motivational speaker. He is the author of four books. Michael won the World Championship of Public Speaking for Toastmasters International in 1978. He is the only living speaker in the world to hold the earned Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation from the National Speakers Association, the World Championship of Public Speaking from Toastmasters and to be a member of the Speakers Hall of Fame for both the National Speakers Association and Toastmasters International. To reach Michael, call toll free 1-800-356-0567 or visit his web site at <http://www.aunline.com>**

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