

2019 ALPHA GAMMA SIGMA SPRING CONVENTION

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: PHILIP HENDERSON

6 APRIL 2019 HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: Storyteller Listening exercise with a grandparent

This exercise is designed to build a bond of love between you and your grandparent (or parent). In addition, you practice the art of being an empathetic listener, a valuable character trait for ethical leaders. The exercise is done in two steps.

In Step 1 your grandparent writes two stories about their life. One story is about an event where your grandparent performed a good deed to help someone else without taking credit for the action. The other story is about an event that your grandparent regrets having done. Regrets are of two types. Some regrets are that your grandparent did not act when she should have. She did not speak up to protect someone deserving protection. The other kind of regret is about actions taken that caused pain and harm to someone else, whether the action was intentional or accidental. Ask your grandparent to write the stories using pen and paper. Ask your grandparent to save the stories without showing them to you.

Step 2 occurs a week later. At that time, ask your grandparent to tell you one of the stories, not to read what she wrote, but just to explain to you why this story is important to her. Your goal is to understand why this story is important to your grandparent. You will know you understand when your grandparent tells you, *“yes, that is why this story is important to me.”*

There are several good results that can arise from this assignment. One result is that you will have practiced the art of being an empathetic listener. Empathetic listeners make storytellers feel great. Another result is that you will enhance the bond of love between you and your grandparent. This exercise may bring tears to your heart and to the heart of the storyteller. These are tears of love.

Below is a photograph taken in 2010 of me with Bill the ox.

Gracefully yours,

Philip H. Henderson, Ethical Magician

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