

## Chapter 1: There's No Place Like Home

*Wisdom is built up, small step by small step, from most irrational beginnings.*

– Bruno Bettelheim

Dora was out of the door at daybreak, the icy winter air feeling tickly on her skin. The earthy smell of burning cedar wafting from brick chimneys peering above the rooftops was a tacit reminder that her sleepy town was still just opening its eyes. But Dora had been up for hours. Finally, the day she eagerly awaited each year had arrived. It was when she and the rest of the managers at Marvelous Snacks headquarters in Farmden, Kansas saw all their friends and colleagues assembled for the final Business Review Meeting of the year.

Dora T. Gayle had a noble face, an innocent smile and engaging eyes that reflected the generosity for which she was widely known. She saw the best in everyone and spoke kindly to them regardless of their position. Because of these qualities, people were drawn to Dora and liked to be around her. She lived in a small house in the Kansas grasslands with her little Scottish terrier named Rainbo, who was her pride and joy.

The final Business Review Meeting of the year was the event at which the leaders of Marvelous Snacks shared the current state of business along with the vision of the future for their company. To Dora, the most gratifying element was to catch that joyfully fulfilled look on employees' faces when they were

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recognized for their year of hard work and their bonuses were announced. All twelve hundred employees were in attendance on the factory floor where this meeting took place.

Marvin E. Lewis, the white-haired founder and president of Marvelous Snacks, was dressed in comfortable clothes with a green neckerchief around his collar. He looked as genial, down-to-earth, and approachable as ever. He was affectionately nicknamed Professor Marv by friends because of his passion for experimenting and teaching.

Just that morning, a prominent Kansas newspaper ran a special tributary piece calling Professor Marv the "Edison of the Edibles" marveling at his gift for producing new snack recipes that had led to the 400-fold financial growth of his company over the last thirty years. Hailing him as an outstanding citizen leader, the article included Professor Marv among the "All-Time Great Kansans!"

Professor Marv was equally venerated inside the company for the leadership, optimism and purpose he inspired in all those who wanted to contribute, seeking guidance from him. As he arrived at the podium, the employees quickly stood with a warm and seemingly endless round of applause. After they were seated, Professor Marv took the microphone, "Hope you all enjoyed your breakfast. My crystal ball tells me that you have saved some room for dessert and I am pleased to bring you some delectable news this morning." The Professor was a genius at epigrams, having the habit of quickly cutting to the key message. "As a result of all of your

hard work, our company has recorded another 10% growth this year."

The employees broke into applause.

"And in view of our success, I am pleased to announce a 30-day bonus for all employees to be included in your next paychecks." Again, the employees exploded into boisterous ovation.

"This is our 30<sup>th</sup> consecutive profitable year. We have been successful not only because of our excellent execution but also because we have been willing and able to renew ourselves. Let's reflect on it a moment. During the first Marvelous decade, our primary product was potato chips. During the second we expanded into other snacks and soft drinks, and over this last decade we have grown our line of products and brands into areas such as health foods. I want to share the credit with each one of you. Your work ethic, adaptability and creative energy will allow us to continue to delight our customers *and* keep our promises to our stakeholders in the future.

"I also would like to thank my staff members for their tireless contributions to our continued success: Dora, Hank, Zach, and Hillary." At those words, the employees gave the four managers a special round of applause in acknowledgment of how competently, ingeniously and compassionately they managed their respective organizations.

Dora T. Gayle was the manager of Human Resources, which Professor Marv regarded as the most critical function of a company. He believed Human Resources could only be managed well by a truly good human being. His philosophy was "Put