

Build The Life You Want!

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In the movie *Field of Dreams*, Kevin Costner's character, Iowa farmer Ray Kinsella, heard a still, small voice inside of him that whispered: "If you build it, they will come". Kinsella eventually listened to that voice, building a baseball diamond in the middle of his cornfield, while facing an assault from his friends and family who were concerned about his sanity. As you know, the outcome was that multiple issues in his life were reconciled, including the breach in his relationship with his deceased father. The final result came about because Ray Kinsella listened to his heart and followed his dream.

I had the pleasure recently of participating in Career Day with a group of local high school students. I explained to them that, as a Career Coach, my job is to help people (typically in their 30's and 40's) figure out what they want to do when they grow up. The knowledge that many seasoned adults still struggle with "finding themselves" seemed to legitimize, to some extent, the conflict within these youth: a veritable tug of war between wanting to realize their dreams and finding *respectable* work.

I encouraged these young people not to adopt an *either - or mindset* for their lives. All too often we think that we can only have one thing or the other. We can do what is fun or we can earn a living. We can chase our dreams or get a job. Somehow we get programmed into believing that the responsible thing is to relegate ourselves to a life of drudgery.

Mark Landrum always wanted to live on the beach. In fact, his fantasy was to simply be a beach bum. Following high school graduation Mark went on to college, received his Bachelors Degree in Business Administration and quickly went to work as an accountant. Mark had a natural gift with numbers and he progressed in his career steadily over the next 15 years. The only problem was that he was stuck in an office building in Houston, TX and suffered from a stifling lack of sand in his toes and salt in his hair.

Then one day Mark finally decided to build the life he really wanted. He moved to the Corpus Christi, TX area, found a home near the water and began to market his accounting services to the many family-owned shops and eateries along the coast. Mark was able to structure his business in such a way that he could work when he wanted to and leave key times open for building sand castles. Mark became an outstanding sand sculptor. In fact, he was so good that people offered to pay him to teach them how to build the intricate sand structures.

Today Mark still does some accounting work, but his passion is in the sand. He makes a good living teaching people from all walks of life how to build sand castles. Major companies have hired him to teach their employees to build the structures as part of their team-building activities. ***Mark is living the life he wants to live and doing it on his own terms.*** You can see his work by visiting his website at www.sandrum.com .

As I shared Mark's story with these students yesterday, I saw a light or two come on in their eyes. You see we don't have to live in an "either-or world". We can live responsible, productive lives and chase our dreams as well. The joy of living comes from getting up

every day and loving what you do. While every day will have its challenges, those challenges are merely potholes in the road for people who are traveling toward their chosen destiny. Mark Landrum is a great example that you can build the life you want and live on your own terms.