

EAGLES AND TURKEYS!



As I begin the second article for The Eagle's Nest, I want to thank the members of The Smoky Mountain Paralegal Association for inviting me to write a column from time-to-time. In these columns I will attempt to share leadership and personal growth principles which can make a difference in a law firm and in the life of each of its team members – including attorneys, paralegal professionals, and professional office staff.

One of the greatest eagles I have ever met passed away recently. Bob Ritchie was one of the greatest lawyers I had the pleasure of knowing during my legal career. He was a gentleman and a scholar, and had a genuine “heart” for people. He represented the best there is in our profession and made you proud to be a member of the legal profession.

Our topic in this issue is “Eagles and Turkeys.”

You may recall that when “Alice” was lost in Wonderland, she came to a fork in the road and didn't know which road to take. There was a Cheshire Cat sitting on a fence. Alice asked the cat which road she should take, and the cat asked Alice where she was going. “I don't know,” Alice responded. The cat then said the most amazing thing. “Then it doesn't matter which road you take, does it?” It is important for us to know where we are going. The choices we make have consequences. You can choose your choices, but you can't always choose your consequences. Good choices bring us up and bad choices take us down. I'm convinced that we are born eagles, but due to

the poor choices we make, we become turkeys over a period of time.

So in this edition, I want to talk about being an eagle and not a turkey. We're going to do a tenfold comparison between eagles and turkeys.

-1- Eagles see life from **above**.

If you have ever climbed to the top of Mt. LeConte and looked out over the beautiful Smoky Mountains, you saw valleys, towns, and sometimes even thundershowers in the distance. The thought occurred to me that this must be how the world looks to an eagle.

Turkeys see life from **beneath**.

Turkeys have limited vision – therefore, they make limited choices – they live in the now with no thought of the future.

-2- Eagles are **looked up to**.

You look at an eagle and say Wow! Watch that bird go. If you've ever been to a UT football game when the eagle is released from the top of the stadium, you've seen that eagle fly to its trainer standing in the middle of 100,000 people. The eagle makes the proper decision because of the good view it has from above. Yes, eagles are looked up to!

Turkeys are **looked down on**.

On our farm we have approximately 50 animals. Since I enjoy doing talks on eagles and turkeys, my two young children purchased a beautiful domestic turkey for me as a present. We named him Stonewall Jackson. Stonewall was a beautiful thing. He was attractive – he could strut around – shake his wings – spread

his tail feathers. His head even turned different colors, but usually all he did was put on a show. Like some people I've known, he could not do much else but just strut!

-3- **Eagles pay the price.**

Quite often when I speak with young people, I will ask them what they would like to be or do in the future. Quite often someone will say, "I want to be a millionaire." It gives me the opportunity to share with them the fact that most of the millionaires I have represented during my legal career were the most disciplined individuals I had ever met. They do the same thing every day. They go to the post office at the same time; they open their mail at the same time; etcetera. And consistently – they make good, solid choices.

It's true eagles do a lot of daring things. They are risk takers. They are achievers. They know where they want to go and they know what the price will be in time, money, and sacrifice, but they are willing to pay the price.

Many years ago, I ran into a gentleman in the dry cleaners in Morristown, and he looked at me and said, "You look like Joe Lawson." I said, "Yes, I'm one of his four boys." He said, "There are two things I will always remember about your father. He never forgot where he came from, and he always knew where he was going." Over the years, I've thought about that statement and what a wonderful accolade it was to a man who accomplished much. It's true. He never forgot his meager beginning and he always was a dreamer – he always knew where he was going.

Turkeys avoid the cost.

Turkeys just kind of play it safe – they avoid the cost. They are not willing to pay the price. They think life owes them something. It's important for us to realize, if we want to grow, no one owes us anything. My father was a

very inspirational man. He brought us up to believe that there are three elements of success which, when practiced over a period of time, will usually make one successful -- inspiration, perspiration, and the desire to serve others. Inspiration alone is not enough; perspiration alone is not enough. There must be the desire to serve others. When someone has an imagination and is willing to sweat, and has the desire to serve others over a period of time, that individual will become an eagle and will become successful.

Successful people form the habit of doing things that failures do not want to do!

~ Allen E. N. Gray

A man by the name of Albert E.N. Gray gave a speech called "The Common Denominator of Success." Gray surveyed many famous individuals and was determined to find what most successful people have in common. He stated: "The secret of success of every person who has ever been successful lies in the fact that he or she has formed the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do." This is profound.

When an eagle looks at an issue, he never asks how much it costs – he asks, "What's the value?" If it's valuable and if it's worth it, he'll pay the price to get there. Turkeys always say, "What's it going to cost me to get what I want? What do I have to do? How much time do I have to give this? Is it going to cost me money?" That's just plain turkey-talk. Eagles never ask those questions. Eagles say, "Is it worth it?" If it's worth it, then eagles will pay the price. They look at the value of what they're trying to accomplish.

How do you deal with issues? Do you say, "What's it going to cost me? How much am I

going to have to put out to get this?” That’s turkey-talk! Eagles say, “Hey, what’s this thing worth?” If they think it’s worth it, they’ll pay the price.

Like Dolly Parton says, “If you want a rainbow, you have to put up with the rain.”

Eagles, almost every day of their lives, do things they don’t want to do – in order to get the things they want to get. Eagles don’t just do the easy things. They don’t just do the comfortable thing. They do the valuable thing, which may be neither easy or comfortable or fun – it doesn’t matter because it’s valuable. That’s how eagles live. Remember, successful people form the habit of doing things that failures do not want to do!

Successful people are influenced by the desire for pleasing results.

~ Allen E. N. Gray

-4- Eagles rise above adversity.

Eagles respond to life, they don’t just react to it. I’ve heard people say we are who we are because of our experiences in life – good or bad. No. We are who we are as a result of how we have responded to problems that come our way. We can get better or we can get bitter. It’s a choice!

Turkeys run from adversity.

A few years ago, there was a study of 300 highly successful people including FDR, our crippled president who led us through the Second World War and The Great Depression; Helen Keller, a famous blind lady who encouraged the Lion’s Club to accept sight conservation as their major project; Winston Churchill, the prime minister who led England through World War II; Albert Schweitzer, a

famous missionary doctor in Africa; Mahatma Gandhi, the former prime minister of India who established non-violent civil disobedience and helped India receive its independence from Britain; Albert Einstein, the most brilliant mathematician in history, etcetera. The results of the study revealed that one-fourth of these high achievers had handicaps, blindness, deafness, or crippled limbs. Three-fourths had been born into poverty and were from broken homes or exceedingly tense situations. They grew up with disadvantages, but they turned their disadvantages into advantages and began to soar! That’s just what eagles do. When a storm comes, turkeys head for cover. They get under bushes and hide. When a storm comes up, an eagle says let’s go! The eagle doesn’t hide from the winds; he flies into them. An eagle normally flies 50 miles per hour, but in a big windstorm he can soar to over 100 miles per hour. An eagle doesn’t run from a storm – he runs into them. And that’s exactly what we should do! Up they go – they just rise above adversity and you can, too.

-5- Eagles are risk takers.

Neil Simon once stated that if Michelangelo didn’t take risks, he would have painted the Sistine Floor! Michelangelo, the famous painter, had a nasal blockage and breathing problems and yet he lay on his back for over three months on scaffolding and painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. He was an eagle.

Turkeys avoid risk.

The truth is we’re born risk takers. That’s how we learn to walk, talk, and ride bikes. You name it – but the older we get the more safe we begin to try to play it. There are exceptions. Colonel Sanders, at 62 years of age with his first Social Security check, started Kentucky Fried Chicken. Colonel Sanders was a real eagle!

Yes, eagles are risk takers. Too many of us have gotten to the point where we're just trying to not look bad. Are we trying to be accepted or perform? Are we trying to get people's approval or are we trying to achieve some results? That's the difference between eagles and turkeys. Eagles want results!

-6- **Eagles pursue success.**

Yes, eagles pursue success – they know that focusing on the future gives them power and energy to endure the present. There was a point in my life when I thought success had to do with the house you lived in, the car you drove, and the labels in your clothes. No. I believe that success is living out the purpose for which you were created. I believe that following your passions will lead you to your purpose in life.

Turkeys pursue comfort and safety.

Eagles want to do something with their lives. They want to have great marriages. They want to raise solid kids. They want to be the best they can be at the job they do. Yes, they pursue success. Turkeys pursue comfort and safety. Albert E.N. Gray says that people become successful because of doing things that unsuccessful people don't want to do and, further, "Successful people are influenced by the desire for pleasing results." He is saying that eagles pursue success. Turkeys just want to be comfortable and will be satisfied with things that can be obtained by just doing the things they like to do.

Why are successful people able to do things they don't like to do while failures do not? It's because successful people have a purpose strong enough to form the habit of doing things they don't like to do in order to accomplish the purpose they want to accomplish. I promise you this: Your passions will carry you further than your intellect and skills any day! If you doubt me, just think of all the things you're willing to do without in order to avoid doing the

things you don't like to do. If you don't want to pay the price to be successful, then don't gripe about it. It's your fault. If you don't want to hustle and work hard and put in extra time to achieve something, that's your choice, but don't sit around griping about it because someone else paid the price and got the results. I'm just saying if you don't like the life you've got, change it. Nothing changes without change! If you don't like who you are and where you are, then you must change something! What are you going to change? If you always do what you've always done, you will always get what you've always got!

- 7- **An eagle's life problems bring out the best in them.**
A turkey's life problems bring out the worst in them.

Again, eagles love storms. For turkeys, life's problems bring out the worst in them. They just complain, get negative, and run and hide under a bush when the storm comes their way. Again, you can get bitter or you can get better from the problems you encounter along the way. The choice is yours.

- 8- **Eagles produce results.**

Turkeys make excuses.

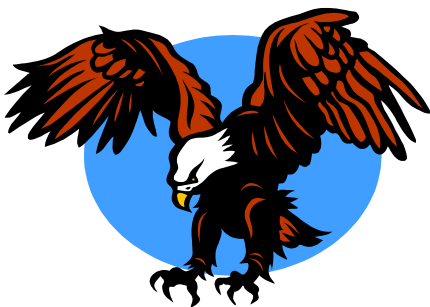
I'm convinced that all of us suffer from a mind-deadening disease called excusitis. We can tell others why we shouldn't, why we couldn't, why we can't, why we won't, etcetera. In 1990, someone studied top-selling T-shirts. In Japan in 1990, the top-selling T-shirt stated in Japanese "We're No. 1." In America, in 1990 the top-selling T-shirt stated "Underachiever and proud of it." That's just plain turkey-talk. Turkeys say, "Let's find the easiest way, the way of least resistance, the simplest, most laid-back life we can find where there's no challenge, no stress, no risk, and no nothing, and let's just live a simple life." And yet they

want the things that successful people have.

You can take an eagle and let it be raised by turkeys, and one day that eagle will be out scratching around in the dirt and will look up and see other eagles flying. That eagle will want to fly. **You can take an eagle out of the sky, but you can't take the sky out of the eagle!**

I wish more people would understand what Ethel Waters (the great black gospel singer) says. "God don't make no junk." Friends, we were born to soar! We were not made to scratch around in the dirt and live the easiest life imaginable. We were not made to be a comfort hunter. We were made to do something with our lives. We were made to soar – to fly – to get out and do something – and be excited about what we are doing.

Someone said it's easier to settle for the average than it is to strive for achievement. It's easier to be saturated with complacency than to be stirred with compassion. It's easier to be skeptical than successful. It's easier to rationalize your disappointments than it is to realize your dreams.



I am convinced that in every one of us there is the desire to soar. Maybe it's been buried for a long time in your life, but it's there. There is the desire to do more and be more with your life. We were made that way. We were not made to coast. We were made to climb. We were made to soar! Paul Harvey said, "You know you're on the road to success – it's uphill all the way!"

-9- **Eagles see opportunities in problems.**

Turkeys see problems in opportunities.

Give a turkey a problem and ask for a solution and you will hear, "We can't do that here. We can't do that." A turkey will give you reasons why they can't, why they shouldn't, why they couldn't. But give an eagle a problem and he'll say, "Hey, here's an opportunity." An eagle sees things that other people just don't see – he's got a great perspective from flying so high. He sees problems but he says – "There's an opportunity." When we have a problem, we can be a turkey and go hide under a bush because a storm is coming or we can be eagles and be men and women who are mature and face issues and come to good conclusions and make the right choices – every time we do this we grow up! It's really exciting to watch.

Someone said, "Cripple him and you have a Sir Walter Scott; lock him in a prison cell and you'll have a John Bunyan; bury him in the snows of Valley Forge and you'll have a George Washington; raise him in abject poverty and you have Abraham Lincoln; strike him down with polio and he becomes Franklin Delano Roosevelt; burn him so severely that the doctors say he'll never walk again and you have Glen Cunningham, who set the world's one-mile record in 1934; deafen him and you have a Ludwig von Beethoven; have him or her born black in a society filled with racial discrimination and you have a Booker T. Washington (one of the greatest black educators ever) or a George Washington Carver (a famous black inventor); call him a slow learner, retarded, write him off as uneducable and you have Winston Churchill." You see, eagles always find opportunities in their problems.



So we can spend our life making excuses why we didn't, why we couldn't, why we shouldn't, or we can spend our lives doing something. Life isn't always fair. But the bottom line is you get a hand dealt to you. That's the only hand you've got to play. Now you can take that hand and try to soar like an eagle with it or you can sit around and gripe and complain all the rest of your life about what you could and shouldn't do. It's your choice.

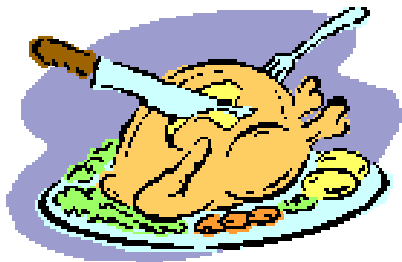
I guarantee that there is not one of us who couldn't fly higher than we're flying – including me. And if you're like me, there is inside you every day of your life this desire to soar and to help other people soar. But unfortunately I've also learned that you cannot take people where they don't want to go. It's their choice.

-10- Eagles become national symbols.

We print eagles on our money, on our flags, and hang them on the walls in our courthouses. Eagles are symbols of courage and strength!

Turkeys become Thanksgiving dinners.

Turkeys really are good with dressing; aren't they?



THREE REASONS PEOPLE BECOME TURKEYS

1. Some of us are raised by turkeys.

All of our lives we've been told we can't do this, that we're no count, that we can't be successful because we didn't have the same chance other people had, etcetera. How many of us grew up

with parents who were always badmouthing everybody above them? They think the boss just exists to make their lives miserable and keep them poor. The government just exists to take advantage of them. Everybody is out to get us. Oh, poor, pitiful us! Turkeys say, "If we had some breaks like all the other people who've made something of their lives, we would be wonderful, too." But now, you do have a choice. You can get bitter or you can get better. It's your choice! Yes, some of us have been raised by turkeys and have been negative and down-in-the-mouth all our lives.

2. Some of us run with turkeys. Think about your children and the friends they have.

As you grow, as you get older, if you have a desire to soar, you've got to be more and more careful about how you pick your friends. There are a lot of turkeys out there and turkeys don't like it when eagles get up and fly above them. John McEnroe (one of the greatest tennis players of all time) said, "Everybody likes success, but everybody hates successful people."

Do you remember Mark Spitz, who won seven gold medals in swimming in one year in the Olympics? Some people said he was just lucky or that he had a certain kind of style that made him glide through the water. No, he paid the price. While he was doing the most, other people were eating donuts.

Luck ain't got nothing to do with it.

Remember, if you run with turkeys, they will keep you gobbling and scratching. It's kind of like crabs. If you catch a crab and put it in a box, you better put a lid on it. If you catch a second crab and put it in the box, you can throw the lid away. One crab will never let the other crab out of the box! Don't be a crab, and don't listen to crabs. If you're running with turkeys, they don't want you to soar.

If you're an eagle, you love to be around eagles.

3. We let failure go to our heads.

A third way you can become a turkey is to let failure go to your head. Most of us have failed before. I have. We have all fallen. We have all failed. We have all blown it from time-to-time. But what we must remember is that failure is an event – it's **not** a person. Now, you can let failure go to your head and quit trying anything or you can suck it up and get over it and get on with it. One of the biggest differences between successful and unsuccessful people is how they handle failure.

***"Everybody likes success,
but everybody hates
successful people."
~ John McEnroe***

Everybody fails. In fact, successful people fail more than unsuccessful people. Eagles may fail, but they don't quit. They get back up. Bobby Kennedy, the assassinated brother of President Jack Kennedy, said this – "Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly." How true that is. If you want to increase your success rate, you usually have to increase your failure rate.

Some of us are paralyzed by the failure of our parents. Some of us are paralyzed by the failure of our kids. Remember, every one of us has messed up. You can either let that thing drag you around the rest of your life or you can just say, "Hey, I messed up, and I'm trying to make a difference." Don't let your failures paralyze you. Everybody has failed. And remember, failure is an event, not a person. When you fail, try to fail **forward**. Then, get back up and ... Go!

HOW DO YOU GO FROM SCRATCHING TO SOARING?

1. When I want success more than security, I'll take the risk. (Now you're beginning to soar!)

2. When I want excellence more than mediocrity, I'll make the effort. (Remember, dreams without personal sacrifice are just fairy tales!)

Turkeys often say, "Good enough." Eagles say, "Is this our best?" Good enough is not good enough. We want to do our best.

3. When I want growth more than comfort, I'll make the change. You can choose the comfort option, and it is a popular choice. Don't gripe about not having the results of growth. It's your choice. **We must embrace growth for ourselves every day.**

4. When I want results, I'll give the time.

Have you ever asked a turkey for some time? Turkeys are so busy – they do so many important things, they never have time to help out. If you want something done, ask the busiest person you know and they'll do it. Busy people make time. Eagles say yes, that's worth it and I'll do it.

5. When I want solutions more than pity, I'll fix the problem. What is it you're griping about? Fix it! Just fix it! You may say, "But you don't know what it will cost me to fix it." Well, there you go again, talking like a turkey.

TWO THINGS YOU HAVE TO DO TO GET OFF THE GROUND

1. Make a choice. You have to decide, "I'm getting out from under this bush. I'm tired of scratching. I want to soar!"

2. Make a commitment. You're going to have to choose to put your life or job on a different trajectory. You're going to make the choice to head down a path you haven't been down. You have to make a commitment to stay on that path and keep it.

Remember: **Successful people form the habit of doing things unsuccessful people don't want to do.**

What are you going to do? Are you going to soar? Are you going to fly? Or are you going to scratch? The choice is yours!

In closing, I want to thank Peter Lord, author of *Turkeys and Eagles*; *Seedsowers*, June 1987; Dr. John Maxwell; Dr. Rocky Ramsey; my Dad; and Dorothy Lazenby, my sixth-grade teacher, for teaching me how to **soar!**

