

A Giraffe on a Cattle Ranch

Terry Beard

As a young lad, I learned that there were two classes of people in the world. Those who had class, and those with no class (ain't got none!). Yes—that special class set aside for bad boys.

Sans doute, without a doubt, some of us spent our youth becoming the best in class. Me, I stuck out, like a giraffe on a cattle ranch. I was the ringleader for my class's band of bad boys. The expectation that all of us must adapt to herd behavior was still foisted on me. But no matter what class I was in, I was going to work to become among the best in class.

To this day, I continue to strive for more than just plain vanilla ice cream. I prefer raspberry ripple!

I learned through delivering newspapers, that if I focused and excelled at customer service, I would reap a bountiful harvest as a giraffe in the herd on the cattle ranch. My motto? Stick out!

The more I endeavored to satisfy my customers with excellent service, the more I could have what the others had in the good class—the better class. Under promise and over deliver. . . was (and still is) the hallmark of best in class.

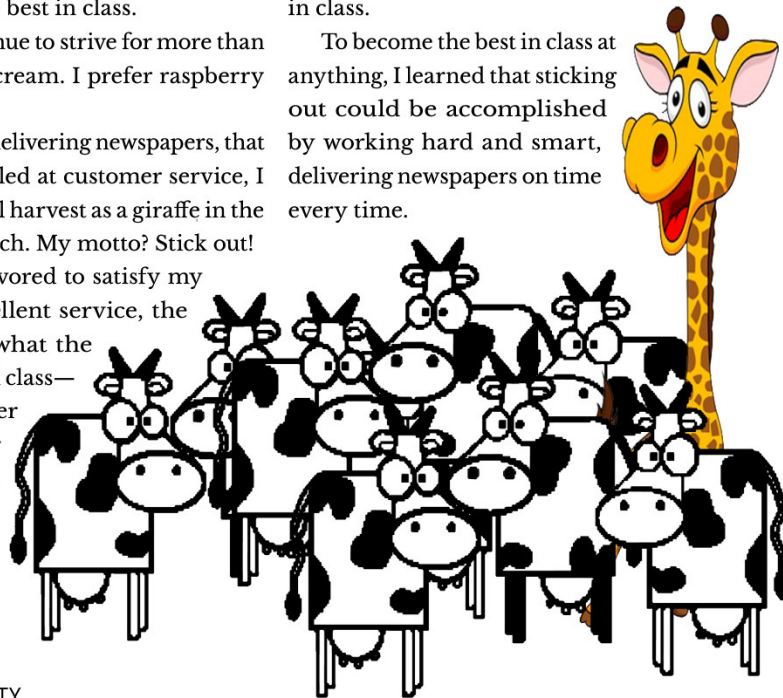
On the streets of Vancouver,

Washington, I became known as the newspaper boy with high standards, someone who could be counted on.

I may not have been the best in class in the school house. But like a giraffe, I became among the best in class on the cattle ranch to my customers and to my superiors. I was organized, disciplined, and grateful for the opportunity to serve my customers well.

Delivering newspapers was not work but an opportunity to enjoy the benefits of being best in class.

To become the best in class at anything, I learned that sticking out could be accomplished by working hard and smart, delivering newspapers on time every time.



There are three keys to becoming the best in class:

- Inspiration
- Aspiration
- Perspiration

Inspiration

I learned that I must be inspired, passionate, possess a deep fire-in-the-belly desire, and work hard to become great at whatever I did . . . a prerequisite to becoming the best in class.

Aspiration

I had a strong desire to be the best of the best in class delivering newspapers. While delivering for the *Oregon Journal* and *The Vancouver Columbian*, I flew often around North America by winning trips to Disneyland, Mexico City, and Alaska. I was enjoying the benefits of best in class in both classes.

Perspiration

I was, and I remain, committed to the sacrifices and management of my time to become best in class. No excuses.

We are all gifted with 24 hours a day. I ask myself, “what do I want to become—to be good at—where is my greatest return to become the best in class?”

To become the best in class is easy. All we need to do is strive constantly and work hard.

Remember the basics:

- Show up on time
- Know and understand the roles, goals, and expectations
- Pay attention to detail
- Be reliable
- Do what you say that you are going to do

and do it—no gaps

- Return emails and vmails in a timely fashion
- Pay compliments to others
- Use please and thank you (be polite)
- Execute—under promise and over deliver



Whether I delivered newspapers, sold art and picture frames or honeymoon vacation packages, was instrumental in building a software information platform, worked on Rotary Membership Committees, delivered Meals on Wheels, was active in Toastmasters helping others to find their voices, or worked in several other companies and organizations, the same principles applied to become the best in class.

Whatever we want from others, let's become the person that we want to attract, and they will arrive. Brenda Ueland, freelance writer and teacher of writing, said it best—“Whatever you want your children to become, be that person.”

To become the best in class, I am reminded more and more about my days as a newspaper boy. The lessons I learned and my commitment

to being the best in class—delivering superior customer service—continues to serve me well.

To be an active member of Portland Rotary Toastmasters is living up to earning best in class. Preparing a speech to become the best in class as a speaker, I use the same formula learned in that little mill town across the river in Vancouver, Washington a few years after WWII.

To inspire others, develop a theme for a speech about what you have done to overcome a difficulty or an issue. Articulate a value or two, a lesson learned or two. Strive to be an awesome storyteller.

Putting pen to paper—getting thoughts on paper—takes time and provides for me a little deeper thinking. In the process, I develop a deeper self—a calmer and more confident self.

When you strive for excellence, you become among the best in class. Do not be afraid to go against the grain of people's expectations. If we want the best of ourselves, we must not allow others to tell us where and how to graze.

By doing the right stuff, you too will become a giraffe on a cattle ranch. When someone asks, "How did you stand out as a leader on the cattle

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ranch?" you can say "by being committed, dedicated, organized, persistent—consistent—with a willingness to stumble—make a mistake or two—and get right back on my feet and keep going."

It all began for me many years ago. I learned more than anything that class is not about the haves and the have nots—best in class is built from the inside out. It takes focus with inspiration, aspiration,

and perspiration.

Carol Gardner, founder of ZeldaWisdom.com and MaxDaddy.com, advises "one must be daring, different, and smart."

Terry Beard initially joined Arlington Club Toastmasters in 2001. He co-founded Portland Rotary Toastmasters in 2015.

Terry is the author of [Squelched - Succeeding in Business and Life by Finding Your Voice](http://Squelched.com), published in 2017 and available on Amazon.com. Visit his book website at squelchedbook.com. You can reach him at terry@squelchedbook.com.



*There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation,
hard work, and learning from failure. —Colin Powell*