



THE COBB FAMILY VALUES

How Family, Faith, and Fortitude Generated My Greatness

Written by Ervin (Earl) Cobb, 18-Times Bestselling Author and Leadership Development Consultant

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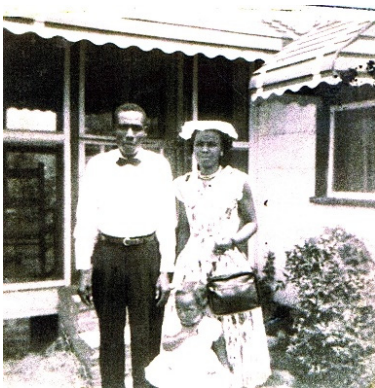
It all became crystal clear to me on July 5, 1999.

As I look back today over the seventy-three years of my life, and how blessed I was to be born into a family where the unquestionable patriarch was Artice Cobb, Sr. and the most admired matriarch was Carrie Bell Cobb. As a couple, they turned out to be not only *amazing* parents but also, the quiet source of my “greatness” --- as characterized in the introduction of this book.

Let me first explain why I remember my father and mother being *amazing*, and even *magicians* at times. I will share with you how my *faith*, and my *fortitude* did indeed generate what can be called the *greatness* in my life.

Then, I will reveal why it all became clear to me on July 5, 1999.

AMAZING AND MAGICAL PARENTS



My father was born in 1916. My mother was born in 1921, in a small town in middle Georgia. They were married in 1936. According to the 1920 United States Federal Census, the population of Vienna, Georgia at that time was 1,103.

Life for them during this period in U.S. history was extremely challenging, at best.

Being descendants of enslaved Africans, life for “Negros” in the South, as blacks were legally called during this time, was characterized by *oppressive Jim Crow laws, systemic disenfranchisement*, and the constant threat of *racial violence and lynchings*.

Now. Let me provide a little perspective regarding the period when Artice and Carrie Bell Cobb began their adult life.

In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson and Vice President Thomas Marshall begin their second terms as the U.S. entered World War I. In 1926 NBC was founded as the first major broadcast network in the United States and in 1927, the 15 millionth Model T rolled off the Assembly Line at Ford Motor Company. Between 1930 and 1939 the Great Depression caused massive unemployment, bank failures, and the Dust Bowl, which crippled agriculture. Then, following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the U.S. entered World War II.

The educational opportunities for my parents were minimum during this period. As a result, my mother was a fulltime house wife, cleaned houses and worked in the hot cotton fields of Georgia in the summers to help make ends meet. While my Father worked in the local pepper mills, painted houses in the local Caucasian communities, and operated a backyard barbershop on the weekends.

Despite these unimaginable social, political and economic challenges, my parents were married for 73-years, and raised eight children in a 4-room house that my father built with his own hands. Food was always on the table, and Sunday's were always filled with church, family gatherings, and late night school homework.



School Photos of Artice and Carrie Cobb's Eight Children

Amazingly, none of Artice and Carrie Bell Cobb's children have been incarcerated, behind bars, locked up or imprisoned. What is more, somewhat *magically*, all of their children completed high school, five earned college degrees, three earned master's degrees and two have earned doctorate degrees.

MY FAITH



The marker in this photo was erected in June 1987 on the front wall of the St. Mark Baptist Church in Vienna, GA. On the marker is the name of Deacon Artice Cobb.

I am well aware that in the United States, the word "*faith*" today has many meanings. This is primarily because, these days, one's faith serves as a bridge between legal standards, religious traditions, and secular social trust. Its usage has expanded from a narrow religious term to a broad cultural concept that describes everything from personal loyalty to political values and constitutional rights.

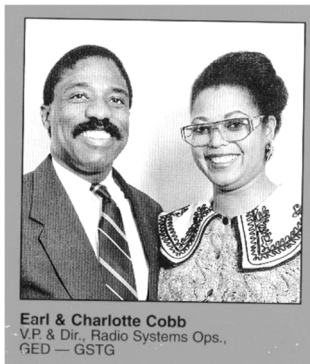
However, for me as a lifelong Christian, faith is defined as more than just a religious tradition or intellectual agreement with facts. My faith in God is very personal. My faith is an active trust in God as my Savior, and is a lived-out relationship on a daily commitment.

Where and when did I acquire and realize the power of my faith?

My faith began as I grew up within my large and loving family and among friends. Bible Study, Sunday School and Church attendance was never a chore or just a routine. It was an expanding part of my life and personal development. My Biblical faith has always given me “confidence” in what I hope for and an assurance about what I do not see.

As I reflect upon the many stages of my *education*, my *professional career*, my *marriage*, my *homelife* and what can be termed as my “*greatness*,” I now realize that the power of my faith and my trust in God provided me a special “peace.” A peace that passes all understanding.

MY FORTITUDE



For me, my “*fortitude*” and “*resilience*” have provided me the *mental* and *emotional* strength required as I consistently faced life’s storms and tribulations.

During my 34-year corporate career, my 44-year marriage and in many other aspects of my life, my fortitude has been the “*quiet force*” that has sustained me, and fueled my curiosity, my energy, and my hunger for continuous improvement.

This includes becoming one of Motorola’s youngest Vice Presidents in the 1990’s to the President and CEO of a high-Tech startup company in the 2000’s, to eventually becoming the author of 18 published books and over 100 articles. However, having positively contributed to the many communities where my wife, Charlotte, and I have called home, and living long enough to fully enjoy my daughter, three grandchildren and a great grandson *stands out the most* as evidence of my steadfast endurance.

JULY 5, 1999



Why did I mention at the beginning of this story that it all became crystal clear to me on July 5, 1999?

Well. On July 5th of 1999, all of my sisters and brothers returned to our parents newly constructed home in Vienna. During the three-day event, we had the opportunity to video record our parents and ask them dozens of questions about their lives.

We named this precious video, “*The Cobb Family Values.*”

When I watched that 27-year-old video a few weeks ago, and listened to the voices of my parents and my siblings speak from their hearts, I became convinced that I should write this story, and share with all of you, how my *family*, my *faith* and my *fortitude* has indeed contributed to my life’s “*greatness.*”