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Leadership has many nuances including having vision, being a strong communicator and deserving the trust of your team. A coach works to enhance your performance. To learn more, send me an [email](#).



Each month I share ideas in *Fast:Forward* to help you have success in business and life. If you would like a subscription, [visit our Web site](#). You'll find 150+ columns from the past 10 years under *Insight*. If you're a longtime reader, please share this with someone who would find it valuable. There are more musings in [my blog](#).

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Ideas For Success | *December*

While I enjoy writing every issue, December is my favorite one. Pausing to select the '10 Things I Learned' is energizing. So, here, once again, is my annual gift to you for being a loyal reader.



Tracking Knowledge – In March, I started logging a spreadsheet of what I learn. One reason was so I wouldn't have to scratch my head to remember the lessons below. There are 57 entries about things I didn't know – from notes on how to be a better coach, to examples of excellent customer engagement, to the humility of Pope Francis. ('When he was still Rev. Jorge Bergoglio, the man who espouses service to others did laundry for seminarians under his tutelage.') You might want to begin keeping your own list January 1... and chart how much you grow during 2014.

Living Credo – Logos Bible Software had a glitch in August that resulted in many online prices being listed at zero. Dozens of people took advantage of this unintentional bargain in the few minutes before programmers fixed it. "We've heard from some asking if they needed to return the free products," blogged president and CEO Bob Pritchett. "We made a mistake. We own it, we learn from it, and we welcome the chance to show we mean what we say about values and 'The Logos Way.'" That's easy when the error is minimal. This one cost Logos \$40,000.

Not Impressive – Our son, newly graduated from high school, was to begin an internship with 21 others at a Fortune Top 10 company. Having completed the extensive paperwork months earlier, as of the Friday before, he didn't know who to see upon arrival. He called the contact. No reply. Monday arrived. He called at 8 a.m. A return email came hours later: "Looks like it will be next week. I'll be in touch." The following Monday another email appeared: "We've decided not to have an internship program this summer. You should make other plans." It amazes me how poorly some leaders deal with communication of difficult news. It amazes me even more how poorly some adults treat tomorrow's leaders.

Great Words – When Kyle left for college, I started texting him a motivational quote each class day. He never mentioned receiving them; yet, the first time I missed – five weeks later – he texted, "No quote?" I fulfilled this commitment 62 out of 75 days before

Take Control

Dr. Sanjay Gupta – the neurosurgeon who serves as chief medical correspondent at CNN – is someone willing to challenge the status quo. Earlier this year he made headlines by switching his opinion, after a lot of research, on the legalization of medical marijuana. This month he penned a piece on how providing insurance coverage won't lead to healthier citizens.

"As a doctor," he wrote, "I think a healthier America is the rallying cry we can all get behind. We have had a rocky, yet still vitally important start, but the point is that access to health care insurance is not nearly enough." He points to studies that show many people lead less healthy lives once they have insurance coverage and promotes the importance of eating well and daily exercise.

I'm a believer in those... and we're a healthy family. However, when illness does arrive at our house, we're blessed to have a wonderful pharmacy that serves as a partner. The folks at Target – where we've been going for 15 years – take time to explain prescriptions, warn of side effects and ensure there are no interaction issues. Team members are experts in their profession, acknowledge us by name, and always are positive and upbeat.

The next year will bring changes – and some of my clients have been

he returned home for the holidays. These are my favorites:

"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending." ~ Maria Robinson

"Mister, when you read Shakespeare, Shakespeare's not on trial. You are." ~ Justice Antonin Scalia, quoting his sophomore high school English teacher, Jesuit priest Tom Matthews

"Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers." ~ Voltaire

Immediate Opportunity – At a tailgater, I was talking college football with a man I hadn't met before. When I told him what I do, he said, "I have a coach – Marshall Goldsmith." Wow! That's the most successful executive coach in the country, and I was curious to find out how he approaches the craft, so I said, "What's the best question, he ever asked you?" The reply revealed brilliance: "Once he stopped me cold in my tracks by saying, 'When is the last time you asked your wife how you could be a better husband? Do that tonight, then ask your employees tomorrow how you can be a better boss.'" Afterward, my buddy told me I had been speaking with the CFO of the world's largest company.

Power Surge – Turn on the switch. Your lights come on. Oil prices rise. You pay more for gas. It snows in Cairo. You think about climate change. So that I could better understand the world's energy challenges, this fall I completed all 30 sessions of the UTX online course "Energy 101." It was a terrific experience – with videos, interactive tools and reading materials. I captured 22 pages of notes and discovered much about energy. Maybe you should explore a MOOC that interests you.

Tough Guys – One of my current projects is shadowing crew leaders for the company that oversees the electric grid in Houston. This allows for 'in the moment' feedback on how they interact with direct reports and team members. I have gained tremendous respect for head linemen, journeymen, apprentices and helpers: unsung heroes who work in high-risk situations in all kinds of weather. While you enjoy Christmas morning, some will be away from their homes repairing downed power lines and getting the lights back on. Spare a thought for their safety.

Bright Future – Kyle and I attended the Shell Houston Open in March. On Friday, we followed a rookie who played at our favorite university. There were 12 people walking with us. The throngs were elsewhere, tracking Phil Mickelson and Rory McIlroy. The object of our attention – here on a sponsor exemption since he didn't have a Tour card – sprayed the ball all over the place, scrambled to a 70 and would eventually finish T-50. A few months later, though, he made history by becoming the youngest winner on the PGA Tour since 1931. For the year, he earned nearly \$4 million, finished 10th on the money list and made the Presidents Cup. Keep an eye on this talented 20-year-old in his burnt orange polo. Golf's next superstar might be Jordan Spieth.

Taking Action – July 4, 9 a.m. I'm trimming shrubs. An SUV slowly circles our cul de sac. The driver searches for something. Perhaps a lost dog. I walk over to his car. "Have you seen a 13-year-old boy in a green shirt on a scooter?" I shake my head. "Our

warned by providers that insurance costs could increase substantially. Plan ahead and own your health. Dr. Gupta captured it best: "None of this works unless we all take personal responsibility, and hold ourselves accountable."

Note: For a fun reflection on the 10-year history of these monthly stories, please take five minutes and read [my latest blog](#). You'll find the names of 77 well-known people who played the biggest role in helping me spread ideas and perspective to make your life and work more meaningful.

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son is autistic. He was in the driveway. This has never happened." Let me help. I knock on five doors. One neighbor is home. We jump in our cars and start driving streets. I pass four policemen doing the same. One hour later. No sign of the missing child. I head home. In front of our house, the father talks with my wife. The boy is safe with his mother. Found three miles away. At a shopping center. We shake hands. Tears build in the man's eyes. He leaves. Two days later a Starbucks gift card appears in our mailbox with a note: "David... Thank you for not hesitating to get involved in finding Andrew. ~ Chris".

Helping Others – Since 2007, I have closed the year by sharing an organization doing great things for others. Take a minute to discover [St. Baldrick's Foundation](#). Our friend's young daughter participated this year, and experienced wonderful joy getting her head shaved to help find a cure for children's cancer. From one event with 19 shaved heads 13 years ago, to this year's 1,383 events with 58,716 shaved heads and \$34 million raised, these dedicated folks are making the world a better place.

This completes a decade and 120 issues of *Fast: Forward*. I leave you with wisdom from Bob Hope, who touched so many with his holiday specials: "My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?"

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, Happy New Year... and continued success in all things during 2014.

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