

DR. MIKEL HARRY

THE GREAT DISCOVERY

BY RACHEL WILEY

HE'S been a cowboy, competed in rodeos, raced Can-Am cars and served as a Captain in the Marines – but you may know Dr. Mikel Harry best as the co-creator of Six Sigma. In the early 80s, Six Sigma was developed as a way to design products and processes to make better business, while Harry was at Motorola. Shortly thereafter, Random House approached Harry and his business partner about publishing his book, entitled “Six Sigma.” Three weeks after being published by Random House, it took its place on The Wall Street Journal’s National Best Sellers list. In 1995, upon its implementation at GE, Six Sigma’s popularity skyrocketed. Jack Welch himself called Six Sigma “the biggest opportunity for growth, increased profitability, and individual employee satisfaction in the history of our company [General Electric].” In 2006, MIT’s Sloan Management School of Business concluded its study of more than 100 key management innovations over the last 130 years, where Six Sigma was listed in the Top Ten. Today, Six Sigma is utilized in over 82 percent of the top 100 Fortune 500 companies.

In 2005, Harry’s friend and colleague from Morgan Stanley asked him a question that sent him on a new journey: “tell us how you think.” With this in mind, Harry began to analyze and extract the pattern of thinking used to create Six Sigma. Harry unearthed 52 big “common thread” ideas that he then grouped into 10 categories, which he named the “10 Supreme Laws of Breakthrough” (initially called tsunamis, an homage to their potential



impact). As a direct result of this work, Harry “extracted the DNA of Six Sigma, but without the math” and from it, The Great Discovery was born.

The Great Discovery is clearly aimed at providing virtually anyone with the means and roadmap to achieving his or her “dream,” which Harry calls “the freedom of choice to live-out one’s core values.” The Great Discovery moves a person from point A (the dream) to point B (achievement of that dream) in the most efficient way possible. Through analyzing key values and forces (that either provide forward momentum or stall progress), The Great Discovery creates and enacts a personalized plan of action that also brings self-awareness into the equation. And, by using the irrefutable logic found within math and science, The Great Discovery is able to stand on facts. Harry says that The Great Discovery not only provides a proven path to success, it develops critical thinking skills along the way.

The Great Discovery is also versatile. Since dreams vary from individual to individual, it can be applied in both business and personal settings. Whether that dream is increased productivity, attending law school, or graduating, The Great Discovery helps visualize and promote a simple, yet systematic approach to solving virtually any type of problem in a highly repeatable and easily teachable way.

In the pilot groups, Harry says that many of participants were Six Sigma certified professionals. They consistently asserted that they wished they had access to The Great Discovery prior to going through Six Sigma training, as The Great Discovery highlights the underlying structure and pattern of thinking (mindset), not just the

.....

Along with his extensive professional credentials, Dr. Harry also boasts academic credentials

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.)
Industrial Technical Education, 1984

Division of Technology, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences & College of Education, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

Areas of Study: Industrial Technology, Technical Education, Research and Experimental Statistics, Quantitative Research Design, Computer Intensive Research Methods

MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.)
Industrial Technology and Education, 1981

Department of Industrial Technology, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.

Areas of Study: Industrial Technology, Technical Education, Research Methods

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.S.)
Industrial Technology, 1973

Department of Industrial Technology, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.

Areas of Study: Industrial Electronics, Experimental Psychology

.....



The Great Discovery's visual aids help promote a systematic approach to solving a problem



tools of improvement (toolset). When creating The Great Discovery, Harry wanted to ensure that accessibility was a key factor, both technologically (user-friendly step-by-step templates that run in Excel) and with regards to audience (one pilot test was a group of teenagers). Owing to this, virtually anyone can utilize the program.

The Great Discovery is a one-day facilitated live course; the rest of the learning takes place with a coach. However, this isn't a sign-in-and-glaze-over course; it's highly interactive, with a live instructor – which drives meaningful participation through “critical discussions” about how the content can be applied in each student's personal life and business life. In this way, students take the training “to heart.”

While Harry asserts that Six Sigma has changed industry at large, he hopes that The Great Discovery can change the world. Where classical Six Sigma can only be deployed into about 2-5 percent of an organization's workforce, The Great Discovery can bring the goodness of Six Sigma to the other 95 percent of the world, whether for personal, business or academic purposes. Another comment that Harry received in many of the pilot groups was, “Where was this when I was 21 years old?” When students are at a critical decision-making point in their education such as choosing a major or a career path, what role could a program such as The Great Discovery play

in helping to lend focus and creating a plan? Harry himself sees this as a valuable tool within the Career Services office. About 80 percent of students are undecided majors before attending school; 50 percent of college students will change majors. With a decision that weighs heavily on a student's future, so little counseling is enacted or mandatory, and as such, students end up changing majors, wasting credits and prolonging the path to graduation. What if a sense of purpose and direction could be explored and provided early on? There is no course in college on how to be successful – though Harry believes The Great Discovery could be that course.

The Great Discovery has already made large strides. Though only recently launched, Harry has already been in discussion with many early adopters. The Great Discovery is being considered for use by the Army, primarily to help soldiers that are transitioning to civilian life. It is also under consideration by the penal system to help inmates assess where they'd like to go in life, and how they can get there once released. The program has similar merit within the healthcare industry, where patients can create wellness plans to keep them from return visits due to preventable diseases brought on by addiction or obesity (and likewise, save the system valuable money). Harry's test group of teenagers not only understood The

Great Discovery, but also suggested that the program be tailored into a program specific to younger kids, raising the question about the program's value in the K12 space – as many have suggested, the path to choosing a career could be started much earlier in life (though the program would work with nearly any “dream” one seeks to achieve). Clearly, its purpose and audience is widespread – and judging by the buzz it has already generated much interest. Judging from the feedback of those that have completed the program, its use will be widespread.

The art-lover, rodeo aficionado and tough-as-nails Marine has spent his life pursuing his passions. Passion, Harry says, is simply an “emotionally charged constancy of purpose.” With The Great Discovery, the pursuit of this “emotionally charged purpose” is well within reach for anyone – and that is a great discovery. **TC**



Rachel Wiley is the Managing Editor of Today's Campus. She can be reached at Rachel@TodaysCampus.com.