



THE DISTELFINK – Honoring Friendship

July 22, 2009

By this time last year, I had secured enough clients to make this advisory practice more than a dream. Their confidence (and financial support!) permitted me to imagine other projects, in addition to providing highly personalized financial advice and customized reporting. It meant planning for a website, conjuring a venue for writing, and trying to make a difference in a broader audience's financial lives were actually possible. I can't believe how fortunate I am that these dreams have become realities in the past twelve months. Frequently my most inspired ideas have come when I am in a very special place, or with a treasured group of friends. This coming weekend, I will experience both the beauty of that place, Silver Lake, and the company of these dear friends again.

For ten years my friend Dorothy, whom I have known since kindergarten, has gathered a group of us for a few days of gorgeous walks, sunning on the dock, delicious food, perhaps a beverage or two, and the support and encouragement of trusted friends. Over the past decade this group has enjoyed births, adoptions and graduations; important birthdays and anniversaries; career highs, and sometimes lows. We have suffered the loss of parents. And we have gotten through it all – often close by, sometimes from afar, but always connected in spirit.

Because I am a sole practitioner, I don't always have someone to bounce my ideas off of, or expound on themes with. But I do have a picture of these smiling ladies in my office. Frequently I glance at them and imagine how Cheryl might handle any given topic, for she is a tremendously talented writer; how Melissa might compare competitive notes with me; how Gail would encourage me to clear my head by doing some push-ups; and how Carmen would sustain my energy with some tasty new salsa she concocted. And then I turn back to the keyboard and the words just start flowing. I am grateful to these women who have helped me know about truly exceptional people like Randy Pausch and his Last Lecture, and authors including Anita Diamant, Arthur Golden and Jhumpa Lahiri. The collective wisdom in this cadre of women is fantastic, and so I try to honor them with this essay.

They have shown me through their own actions how to follow a dream – be it partaking in the sale of a family business and continuing on the ensure the acquirer's success, or creating beautiful paintings and serving as a museum Trustee, or teaching and inspiring children, or retiring at age 45 from a first career in order to be a fulltime Mom (and still imaging what the next career chapter might look like), or lovingly being a great parent and spouse - ALL fill me with joy and energy, and the desire to keep learning and creating within my own practice.

It was, in fact, on the way to a lunch last January that concept for the Distelfink started to take form. How appreciative I am for that, and for all the outrageous banter, laughter, and hugs of

encouragement, we have shared with each other all these years. Thank you ladies, and cheers to the days to come!

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