



What I Learned . . .

from Dr. Joseph Juran, PhD, by Dr. Bill Gold, MD, senior VP for innovation, Healthways

“The first time I met Dr. Joseph Juran was in 1990, when I attended a seminar on quality management at the Juran Institute.

“Dr. Juran wasn’t on the program, but he came in during the break. The whole class just gasped; it was like a rock star had entered the room. Dr. Juran’s career was based on mathematics and science, but he was a great communicator. All improvement, he said, is made project by project; and in any project, there often is the uninvited guest. The uninvited guest, he explained, comes in the form of the human reaction to change.

“Part of dealing with the uninvited guest is . . . preparing for it. Today, it’s called change management. Most reaction, he said, is based on fear of the unknown. If you remind people of the things that will *not* change, their fears about what will change will be less.

“Humans are social animals, and yet the workplace is frequently devoid of meaningful interaction. We have similar likes, dislikes, and struggles, but when we get to work, we leave all that behind and just focus on the job.

“When I led a group of 250 staff, I worked hard to become more available, more empathetic. I stressed that . . . we would work as a team and value everyone in the division. Having fun was part of that. We used to joke that we were ‘fun impaired,’ but working on it.

If you create an atmosphere that says each job is important, each colleague has an appreciation for the organization and his or her role in it. You feel good about yourself and are more able to think creatively.” **tc**

Vicki Stavig (vstavig@comcast.net) talks lessons in life and commerce with business leaders each month.

✦ After practicing medicine for 15 years at Georgetown and Texas A&M universities, Gold moved into administration and focused on quality in the health care system, eventually landing at Healthways, a Minneapolis-based provider of wellness and disease-management programs. He found a hero in quality-management pioneer and author Joseph Juran, who died in February at the age of 103.

