STORY | LEADERSHIP

Frank Keefer – Changing People's Lives

Frank Keefer's life purpose is to help as many people as he possibly can, realize there's more to life than they currently are aware of.

from **The Greatest Networkers in the World** *by* **John Milton Fogg**

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Frank Keefer didn't come from an affluent background. In fact, he didn't experience indoor plumbing or electricity until he was about six years old when he moved to the city. Frank was a "war orphan" from World War II. He grew up on a tenant farm in western Maryland, then went through the public school system in Baltimore and was self-supporting by the time he was 15 years old.

Frank expected he had no options for the future outside of flipping burgers or driving a delivery truck, so his goal was to go in the military. He figured he would spend a career there. That would give him an opportunity to see the world and "be somebody."

Frank enlisted in the Marine Corps and a couple of years later, the Vietnam War broke out. He went to Vietnam. "As an infantryman," he said, "you had about 100% chance of being killed or wounded." Frank "enjoyed the latter" several times.

He decided the military was not the career for him.

He went to college. Paid for 100% of it himself, because "the GI Bill" was insignificant in those days."

"I was one of the first returning Vets to go to school," Frank said. "In those days, the teachers had to sign-off on the fact that you were actually attending class. It was just a brutal environment for a veteran. So, I dropped my veteran status and I went through as a war orphan, which

actually paid me 10 dollars more a month. That was a lot of money in those days."

"And the interesting thing was, I barely made it through high school," Frank said. "I think part of that was because I worked 50-60 hours a week, but in college because the environment was so harsh, I was determined to get through as quickly as I could. I drove a cab at night in Baltimore city. Got through in two years and graduated with honors."

By that time Frank was married, had a child and he thought his leadership experience in the military, his scholastic record, and the fact that he was married would help him secure a job. But in those days, people just weren't interested in hiring veterans.

So Frank got a job building furniture for Montgomery Ward. His take home pay was $48 a week, $3,000 a year. Finally, Frank got a "real" job teaching 12th grade. He really enjoyed that. He taught political science.

At that time, his brother was missing in action in Vietnam, so Frank went back in the military with the intention of finding him. This time he went into the Army and got involved in the Special Forces and went through the Ranger School. He received a direct commission for Combat Leadership, but by that time the war was winding down and Frank could see that promotional opportunities were going to be limited.

So, Frank got out of the military and went back to teaching. But he was transferred to the 7th grade, which for him was like babysitting. He bailed out of that and started climbing the corporate ladder.

Over the next 15 years, Frank worked for seven Fortune 500 corporations, seven multi-billion dollar companies and a bunch of start-ups.

"I would do extremely well," he says, "making over half a million dollars a year, but I'd reach the point where my reward was either increased sales quota, decreased commissions or diminished territory. I woke up in Kansas one day and had no clue where I was. I decided, "That's it. I'm done."

Frank walked away from corporate America with no job prospects. He decided he was going to go into business for himself. He wanted to work at home, which was a very unusual concept at the time for somebody with Frank's corporate background.

"I met my wife when we were both 40 years old," Frank said, "and when I got married, I told her, 'If you let me work for a couple years, I'll make enough money and we'll retire.' I worked several years on a contract that was to pay us about $8 million and bought an expensive piece of property. The multi-billion dollar company decided to renege on paying. All they gave me was a $50,000 buyout. We had to liquidate our life's savings to pay the debt on the property. So when I walked away from corporate America, I didn't have a dime and I had no prospects.

"I came home and told my wife I'd quit and she said, 'That's okay.' I said, 'You don't understand. We don't have any money. We'll probably end up living in a tent.' And she said, 'I'd prefer a tree house.' Those were her exact words. And I said, 'You really don't get it,' and she said, 'You'll think of something.' The confidence that I had from my wife was unbelievable."

It was around that time Frank was introduced to Network Marketing.

He immediately saw the leverage and the opportunity of a production-based commission system.

So he got involved. They had one of the more difficult pay plans, but Frank saw if you hit the top level, you were worth millions and millions of dollars a year. "I never achieved a level that I wanted to with that first company," Frank said, "but I was on my way."

"The important thing to remember is that it was an apprenticeship," Frank says. "A lot of people get into a Network Marketing business and they don't enjoy success overnight, and they don't understand that anything you do— I don't care if it's a carpenter or a heart surgeon— there's an apprenticeship program that you have to go through until you learn what you need to do."

“I look at everything that I’ve done,” Frank says, “whether it’s in martial arts or sky diving or anything else where I’ve achieved top levels, and it took years and years of studying and practice. Network Marketing is no different.”

Frank went to work with a couple of Networking companies, gong to the top of each one. He was terminated by one company. He didn’t do his proper due diligence on another, learning later the owner was a crook, so he bailed out. At that point, he was done with Network Marketing, but Frank inadvertently stumbled onto his current company.

“At first I thought it was same old, same old,” he says, “but they did have a unique compensation plan that was designed for the statistically average person. I could see that you could almost be an idiot and be successful.

“Once I saw that the pay plan really worked, I decided to go for it,” Frank said. “I used the organizational management skills that I had developed in the military and in corporate America, and I very selectively recruited people. It wasn’t too long before I had people coming out of the woodwork to join up with me, but I probably turned down 90% of them.”

> **I wouldn’t bring anybody in that I didn’t think couldn’t hit $100,000 a year annualized within their first 12 months.**

“And so I went on in and that’s what happened. I was very successful. Of the first 10 people that were in my group, eight of them had over a quarter of a million annualized within their first year.”

Frank’s income went up dramatically. He was almost at a million dollars a year. “In my 37th month,” Frank said, “my heart pooped out on me and I was told I wouldn’t make it out of the hospital, but I did. And I’d reached a level where I’d never have to work again.”

That was 15 years ago and Frank’s company has continued to pay him since then, and he’s worked to the degree that he can.

“I enjoy the business,” Frank says. It’s a people-oriented business. It’s no different than corporate America. You’re really a problem solver. People

identify their problem or you help them identify their problem, then it's your job to provide a solution for it— whether that solution is time or money or a product. It's all just conversational marketing."

"The reason I got into this business in the first place was I wanted to be with my wife, Gingie, pure and simple," Frank said. "I was a kid that grew up with nothing and I'd reached the point where I had the Mercedes, I had the gold Rolex Presidential, I had all that stuff, and it just dawned on me one day that it didn't mean anything. I was in my late 40s. I just thought, 'What the hell am I doing? Who cares about all this money? It's not worth it.' I wanted to spend time with my wife and savor my life."

"And that desire hasn't changed," Frank said. "But I'll tell you, for a couple years, when I couldn't work at all, I really I missed it. It was like, 'What have I done lately? Whose life have I changed lately?'"

"Because that's what this is really all about," Frank says "Changing people's lives."

"When you take somebody that has the desire, but hasn't made it… I got a fellow out in the Great Northwest, he'd been married for 18 years, working 80 hours a week, and he never saw his family. And today he's a million-dollar earner. He's with his family all the time now."

"I had a gal the other day," Frank said. "She came in this business when she was 18 years old. She actually lived in a tent in the woods with her mother, and I believe she had five or six siblings. There was no father around."

"The mother came into my business and then the daughter. She didn't have a lot of, you know, social influence or anything, but she stayed with it. She's now a million-dollar earner. There's a lot of self-satisfaction in that for me, because that's two generations of people's lives that I may have had some influence on."

"When they come up to you with tears in their eyes, and thank you for the fact that they're together as a family, you can't put a price tag on that," Frank said. "And of course they're the ones that did it. I didn't do it. But they look to me and to others, I'm sure, as more than a causal factor, but as the one that actually did it for them, which again isn't true. You know,

everybody that's successful does it on their own. But there's just nothing like that."

"You know, I've run into people in airports that I don't even know, that have thanked me for changing their life and it really gives you a sense of purpose. And it becomes addictive. You almost crave that. I do."

Frank Keefer's life purpose is to help as many people as he possibly can, realize there's more to life than they currently are aware of.

"And I arduously approach that," he says. "I mean, I think about that every single day."

The question Frank always asks people is, "What do you really want to do with your life? You're really only here one time. What do you want to do with it? Are you going to make a difference?" And he's very serious about that.

> **I realized early on that everything I had done in my life had led me to the point where I've found a business that truly was who I am.**

Frank Keefer has helped more than 300 people become million dollar earners in his company.

"Somehow they saw some inspiration," Frank says. "Something that I did made a difference in their lives, and you can't really put a price tag on that type of psychic income."

"I'm working now, not for the money, because I'm fortunate enough to be comfortable, but it's just a great feeling when you change somebody's life.

"That's why Network Marketing is such a great business, you know. That's why I absolutely love it."

From ***The Greatest Networkers in the World***

John Milton Fogg is an author, editor, speaker and coach. His books and audios have sold over three million copies worldwide.

He is the founder and former Editor-in-Chief of the highly regarded publication Upline®... was a Contributing Editor to SUCCESS magazine... the founder and former Editor-in-Chief of Network Marketing Lifestyles magazine... founding editor of Networking Times... the founder of GreatestNetworker .com... co-founder of TheNetworkMarketing Magazine.com and is the creative force behind TransformingMLM.com. You can connect with his writings on a regular basis at TheFoggBlog.com and learn more about what he is up to by going to http://JohnMiltonFogg.com

John is the author of the best-selling industry classic *The Greatest Networker in the World,* which has been read by more than two and a-half million people around the world and he has edited and contributed to far too many books to be mentioned here.

He has spoken around the globe, through out Canada and the United States, in Australia, China, Costa Rica, Crete, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, Trinidad and the Ukraine.

John is married to Jekaterina (Katyusha), has a daughter Rachel 28, son Johnny 23, daughter Eleonora Milena (Ele) who's 7 and Anais Polina (his 'last child') was born in March, 2006.