

# The Septic Tank Call Which Changed My Life Forever

Can you look back in your own life and point to a moment of an unplanned chance happening that changed your life forever? I have decided a lot of what we become in life determines largely on one thing: Luck! Upbringing, education, faith in God (or lack of faith for that matter), and decision making can certainly be contributing factors, but plain old luck has a major influence.

Of course, there is just not good luck. Unfortunately, many good people seem to be plagued in life by bad luck as well.

Reflecting on my own life, I can point out to one random unplanned moment which I have always referred to as "The Septic Tank Call Which Changed My Life Forever." In 1972, I graduated from college and spent several months in a tight job market looking for a job to no avail. One morning in the Chattanooga

newspaper, there was an ad for a counseling position posted through an employment agency. I went to the agency, and they sent me out for an interview. The first stroke of luck was the interview was with a State agency, and there was a mix up by the new director who did not know a state job was not supposed to be handled by an employment agency. That was good luck! I wasn't that good of a student, and while I was waiting for my interview, the valedictorian of my college walks in to be interviewed for the same job opening. That was definitely bad luck!

I finally was called into the director's office, and the interview was lack-luster at best. He wasn't in to me, and I was just not doing well at all in the interview, when "The Septic Tank Call Which Changed My Life Forever" took place.

The director's phone rang, and as I listened to him talk,

I figured out his septic tank was backed up and this was the plumbing company calling to arrange to come and pump it. I heard the director give his address on Thrushwood Drive to the person on the other end of the phone.

When the director got off of the phone, I said, "I didn't mean to be eavesdropping, but do you live on Thrushwood Drive in Red Bank?" He said that he did, and I told him the girl's name I was dating and told him she lived on Thrushwood Drive. Immediately, his whole demeanor changed, and he said "You're the one dating her?" From that point on, the interview was completely different. It went from "this is what the job description is" to "when you start, you will be - - ." As I left his office, he said, "Oh, by the way, you'll be working up in Cleveland."

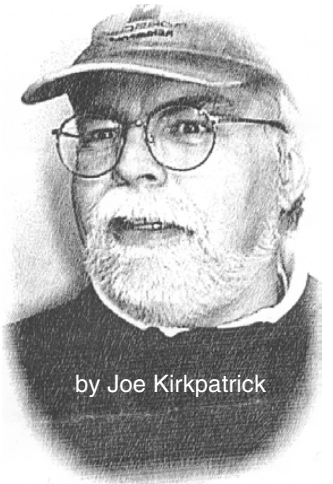
When I moved to Cleveland, I bought a used VW after learning my job re-

quired about 500 – 800 miles a week in travel. At the end of the first month, I had to have a brake job done on my VW and it was \$67. Back then, I was making \$520 a month before taxes, so \$67 was a sizeable amount. I had never even checked the oil on a car when I graduated from college, but after paying to have my brakes fixed, I decided I better get some tools and learn how to work on my car myself. I got pretty good at working on VW's, and other people started to ask me to work on theirs at night. After a few years, my wife had gotten all uppity about having our driveway full of VW's, so she said either rent a place or she was leaving. I rented an old building out on North Lee Hwy toward Charleston in April of 1979, and started working on VW's at night up there. In June of 1979, something totally unforeseen happened: Gas prices went from sixty-five cents a gallon to over

\$1.20! People were in a mass panic – they even started dragging VW's out of junkyards and wanting them fixed. I quit my job, and within five years, I had five locations in two states. Was I a smart businessman? No way! I only had one business course in college, Economics 101, and I made a "D" in it. My success was a total fluke based on random coincidental good luck. In fact, a good Christian man who is a friend of mine who had a parts business, which catered to GM dealers, was wiped out by the increase in gas prices that helped me so much!

Now, before you think I don't thank God for my blessings, you are very wrong. However, I just don't believe God plugged that director's septic tank, raised everyone in America's gas prices, or ruined my friend so I could be successful.

If that septic tank company had not called at that exact moment, I can almost be cer-



by Joe Kirkpatrick

tain I would not have married my wife, had my children, lived where I do, or have done what I have done. Would my life have been better or worse? That is certainly a mystery of life I will never know.

Have you had a totally random chance happening that changed your life forever? If you would like to share it with me, I would like to read it.

Readers can contact Joe Kirkpatrick at [Tristateim@aol.com](mailto:Tristateim@aol.com)

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