

Taylor Richards - 1 Year of Blessings

MEET

TAYLOR RICHARDS



One Full Year
Of Blessings

By DR Rawson
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Taylor Richards

The most important year of my life.

By DR Rawson

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Snapshot of Taylor Richards

Born: November 27, 1952 - 6 lbs, 10 oz.

Name: Taylor Eugene Richards

Parents: Harry and Mary Richards

His Name Today: Taylor Richards

Taylor Richards grew up in Huntington Park, California. His Father worked as a machinist. His Mother was an accountant.

In the fifties and sixties, the town he grew up in was peaceful and all of its citizens worked together as a community. It was in their homes and places people don't talk about where unrest, hatred, and the problems associated with have and have not families exists.

Prologue

While my younger years were not very pleasant, my life is wonderful. What I've learned, particularly while I was in Vietnam was to appreciate everything, including the moment your in. Positive things happen, I began to call them blessings.

I'm now in my late fifties. My wife and I have two children and a marriage that we hope is an example to our children. Over the years I've heard people say so many negative things and most people never live long enough to appreciate what they have. So many people have asked that I share the happiness and blessing that Allison and I shared in our first year of marriage.

We hope you learn from what we've experienced.

Sincerely,

Allison & Taylor

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Chapter 1- The Precursor Years

I want to take you back in time. There are some things about me that you should understand. I'm going to share them even though they're very difficult for me.

My older sister Beverly died at age 12. At that time, I was 10. My parents couldn't get past Bev's death. That's when our family became dysfunctional and frankly awful. At times I know they didn't think about me. The Pastor from the Church of God always came by every week. It was his way of checking in on us, but I knew he wanted to check on me. Unfortunately, my parents refused his help and intended to grieve over Bev's death on their own terms.

After three years of this, I was finally in high school with my friends and members of my Counts Hi-Y club. In my freshman and sophomore years, I was lost until one day, one of the guys from a class I had, sat down under a tree with me. Here's what I remember him saying:

I've seen many sad sacks in my day, but you're about the worst I've seen. That's why I'm here. I want to be your friend; my name is Jud; he said, "Can I ask you a few questions?" Sure, I said.

"First, why didn't you go out for football? You're a big guy for your age. How old are you?" I said "I transferred in after football season. I'm fourteen. I'm 6' 2", 240 lbs." Jud said, "Holy crap, you're huge. I'm only 5'10" and weigh 180. There's a big difference there."

"What position did you play?" Asked Jud. "I played right guard on offense and center linebacker on defense." "How big were you in the 9th grade?" Asked Jud. "I

was 6 ft. 1 inch and weighed 225 lbs. Jud said". "How well did you do playing football?" Asked Jud. "I said I won all-league only because no one could knock me down." "Damn boy, it sounds like you've had your moments," I said; "It was fun. I especially appreciated the distraction."

"OK, that's why I came over. Why the long face, pouting eyes, and you never look up at anyone? Well, you have looked at me a few times; that's good." Said Jud. He said, "Listen, Taylor, I came over here because I want to be a friend. I can speak for Mom and Dad; we want to be friends with you."

"How would you feel about coming over for dinner tonight?" I said, "Really, Jud, you hardly know me." "Hey, I know that you're a good guy if you're playing football. OK, well maybe, probably." We both laughed.

At 6 pm, I went to his home. It was in the historic section of the city. He lived in a large three-bedroom home. They owned a second-hand store in Los Angeles. They had been in the home for over fifty years. Dinner included a vegetable I'd never heard of, Okra. Let's say I still hate it.

The four of us spoke over dinner. Jud and his parents were Quakers and very spiritual. After they had all heard my story, Jud told his parents how much he loved them and how grateful he was for all he has.

Me, I was crying. I hadn't cried like that in a long, long time, probably since Bev died. I remember that I couldn't turn it off. But here's what Jud's parents suggested to me;

"Taylor, begin forgiving yourself; you had nothing to do with Bev's death. Nothing. Also, realize that your parents had nothing to do with it either. It happened. The only person at blame is the person that hit her."

"Next, forgive your parents; they have no idea how to grieve. One day, they may look back and realize their mistake."

"Finally, just because your parents do something or don't, doesn't mean you have to do it or act as they do. You don't have to treat others like they treat you. It would help if you treated others, including your parents, the way you want others to treat you. Do you understand?" I said "yes."

"Taylor, our home will always be open to you. You may come here, call, sleep, or wherever, we want to help. But, if you want to spend the night, please be honest and make sure your parents know." I said, "I promise."

"Can we say a prayer before Jud drives you home?" I said "sure." I remember it like this, Jud's Dad said the prayer:

"Father in Heaven, we're here with one of your sons whose in a lot of pain. He's been living with it for years. Yet, he's prepared to forgive those who have hurt him and others in his name. Father, we ask that you place your loving arms of support around him. Please confirm your presence in his life. We all are so grateful for all we have received. We pray in your name. Amen." We all said Amen.

I said, "Thanks Jud, I've never had a true friend. Tonight was like nothing I'd ever experienced. I will do everything I said I would. May I let you know how it goes? He said, "Absolutely, plus we have tree time." We both laughed.

Now you know my back story. From the day I met Jud and his parents, I've done everything I can do to be and do the right things. It hasn't always been easy, but with persistence, it's doable.

I took the time to define my life, what I wanted, and in many cases, how I would get there. It was a rough roadmap to *a better life*.

My high school years were amazing. I had so many friends, lettered in football, and was even a cheerleader for the track team (I liked the girls and the uniforms). In addition, I was President of the Honor Society, was involved in school politics, and went to Boy's State in Sacramento for a whole week.

At graduation, I had my choice of three full scholarships, Rutgers University, San Jose State, and Claremont Men's. I took a different path; I went into the Army. Then, of course, I wound up in Vietnam, as did all of us that signed up for the Army in those days. I was a helicopter pilot.

I did my time and returned home the night before I turned twenty-one. No one wanted that war, but my friends were glad I came back alive. They threw me a party, and I was legal to drink. Funny, after one drink, I switched to Coke.

That night, two incredible things made my twenty-first year the best year of my life.

Chapter 2 - The year begins

Blessing 1 - I met Allison, the love of my life.

The welcome home party gave me two opportunities. The first was meeting the love of my life. From across the room, with music and friends blaring in my ears, I saw the woman of my dreams. We both stared at each other for a few minutes; it could have been an hour, I was mesmerized. Finally, I walked up and said, "Did you know I've waited sixteen years to meet you?" She said, "Wow, that's quite a line. Is it true? I'm Allison, by the way. So, if it's true, let me hear it."

“I’m Taylor, Taylor Roberts. Those people in that corner are my friends giving me a party for making it back alive. However, the most important place I want to be is right here. May I tell you why I’ve been waiting? She said, “I wouldn’t miss this story. So, by all means, please proceed.”

“Allison, I was five years old when I had two life-affirming dreams:

1. I dreamed that I was sinking on a Navy ship.
2. When I woke up, I told my Dad. He was in the Navy. I apologized over and over.

I was not going to be in the Navy. He assured me it was O.K.”

“A short time later, I had another dream. I was standing at the altar and a woman with your blonde hair, looking just like you, was there to marry me. I told my Mom”, and she said, “Taylor, we all have dreams.” “I said this was important, Mom.” She said, “O.K.”

“Allison this is what I remember and have pursued over the past sixteen years. I have to return to the party, and you’re welcome to join me, or please give me your phone number, and I’ll call you before Noon tomorrow. She said I doubt that, but I’ll give it to you anyway. I’d like to know more about you.” I said I wanted to know everything about her.

Back to the Party

“Hey Buddy, where have you been?” “I’ll tell you later, John.” Jud said, “Yeah, I’d like to know what’s more important than this celebration.”

One of the guys at the party was an older man tagging along with his son, Max. I had met him a few times when we were all in high school. His name was Mr. Evans. He owned a manufacturer’s representative firm and would like to hire me. He gave me his number and told me to call him tomorrow.

At the end of the party, I went with Jud to his Mom and Dad’s house; I had missed them so much. I had told my parents I was coming home on Sunday and would be there before Noon. I slept like a rock.

Blessing 2 - I secured a date with Allison.

Blessing 3 - I was offered a job selling.

As promised, I called Allison; we set a date for this Friday at 7 pm. She gave me her address. My next call was to Mr. Evans. He said, if you show up on Monday at 8 am, I’ll give you a job on

inside sales. I asked of what? The answer was a little surprising. He said, "Plumbing Products." One thing is for sure, I needed a job, even if it was just marking time to figure out what I wanted to do.

So, to summarize the first two days of being twenty-one, I made it back from Vietnam alive and without injury. I met the woman of my dreams, and I had a place to work.

The question I had was, how do I keep this up? I realized these first two were a bit unusual. However, I might pull this off if I had a well-thought-out plan.

On Sunday, I went to Mom and Dad's home. I was stunned by what I found.

I had not seen my parents since the day I turned eighteen. I have not called them or communicated in any way. Yet, I received a warm welcome in a civil and, dare I say, loving way. I sat down on what looked like a new sofa.

Mom said, "Your Father and I owe you an apology and a huge debt of gratitude. As you know, the last time you saw us was not pleasant for any of us. In moment, we realized that we were not going to see you again, perhaps ever, because of you going to war. Your Dad and I freaked out, or so we thought."

The Pastor came by from our Church. He's always polite to us but was looking for you. When I told him that you had enlisted in the Army, he had a look on his face that I'll never forget.

At that exact moment, your Father came home from work. That is another story. Pastor Williams said, "May I please have some time to talk with you about your son?" Dad and I said, "Yes, please tell us anything."

The Pastor said that in our grief, we completely forgot about our son. There was very little if any attention paid to his needs (not wants) and to support him. So let me tell you about your son.

Those many trips to your home let him stay focused on him, not you. It's rare that a child that age can help their parents. So, while you were doing you, he was trying to be the best version of himself. His best friend is a boy named Jud. He and his parents gave him a set of rules and guidelines to create the best version of himself. He told us about your many accomplishments in school. He talked about football. He shared your scholarships.

He also shared that, to his knowledge, you were praying for us every day. Yet, he refused to get caught up in your day-to-day struggles. He had his job after school; he bought the food and clothes he needed.

He asked us how we felt about that. We were both crying. It was tough to hear that we treated our boy that way. Taylor, we were and are ashamed. Your Father and I looked at each other and knew we needed help. We asked for his. He kindly agreed to visit us weekly for the first few weeks. After that, we started going to Church. We met others that have struggled.

Finally, it was on a Saturday; everything came together. We had lost so much, including you. We weren't sure you would even see us when you got out of the Army. We knew we had to make changes. We did. We helped each other. We found each other and the love we used to have for one another.

“Taylor, you must find all of this very hard to hear,” said Mary.

“Mom and Dad, I do, but I feel like my prayers were answered. Our home looks like it did before Bev. died. How are you handling that?”

Mom said, “We found that we missed her AND you. We finally came to grips with the fact that neither of us could have stopped what happened to Bev. However, in your case, we will one day be held accountable for how we failed and, I might even say, abandoned you. Can you ever forgive us?”

“Mom and Dad, I forgave you when I was a sophomore. I met some people that helped me through high school. I was with them last night. It was my best friend Jud's parents. One of the things they told me was that I would never really move forward until I completely forgave you guys. It took a couple of weeks, but I did it. So the answer is you're already forgiven. I love you both.”

Mom said, “Do you want to see your old room?” I said, “Yeah, I suppose.” As I turned the corner and peeked through the door, it was like I had never left, except it was spotless, with everything in its proper place. Somehow, that was the finishing touch.

Later we went for Bar-B-Que over on the boulevard. Then we strolled down the main street. They asked a lot about Vietnam. I didn't and still don't want to talk about it. I told them I was a helicopter pilot, and that was about it.

Blessing 4 - My parents made it back from the edge.

Well, that was the *forth blessing*; at this point, I'll say I may have my parents back in my life in a good way.

As promised, I showed up for work on Monday at 8 am. Although there was very little I could think about, Allison consumed my thoughts.

That afternoon, Mr. Evans called me in for a personal interview. He said:

“Taylor, can you see yourself doing this day in and day out for the rest of your life?” “No, I can’t.”

“He said, O.K., what if you had a company car and a territory where you called on wholesalers, architects, and engineers? You would receive a salary and commission. Can you see yourself doing that?” “Honestly, Mr. Evans, I haven't done the work, so I don't know. I can tell you I'm a hard worker. If you let me, I'd do everything I know and every bit of training to succeed.”

Blessing 5 - Promoted on the same day he hired me.

Mr. Evans said, “*Has anyone asked you what you did in the Army?*” “No, they haven't. I was a Warrant Officer 2nd class and a helicopter pilot. I did two tours in Vietnam, Sir.” Mr. Evans sat back in his office chair and said. “Thank you for doing what you did. I'd ask you about it, but if you're like most vets, as I was from WWII, you don't want to talk about it.”

“So, let me ask you, what do you plan to do with your helicopter experience?” I said “I haven't even looked at the possibilities. But I know I'd like to get my pilot's license and maybe even a commercial pilot's license.”

Blessing 6 - I was introduced to a way to use my flying experience.

“O.K., let's change the nature of this conversation. First, you're hired as an outside salesman; we'll get you a new chevy company car and start your training next week. Then, you can finish your training this week. “

“Now, I was a training pilot during WWII. I was shot down, and when they recovered me, they sent me to the hospital and then back to the states as a training pilot for the rest of the time I was in the Army/AirCorps. I have my own single-engine, 2-passenger Cessna 172. I train pilots on the weekend and I belong to a flying club. We don't include Helo's, but several of our younger

guys are Helo pilots, who might know the best way to use that experience. We have a meeting tomorrow night; it would be great if you could come as my guest." I said, "Sir, I don't have a car."

Blessing 7 - information to figure out what I want to do

"O.K., well, we have a couple of cars we're not using. Pick one to drive temporarily until you pick up your new Chevy the next Monday. You know that it is a suit-and-tie position." "Not a problem," Max said, "One other thing, please call me Max; most people do." I said, "Thanks so much. Please get me the time and place, and I'll be there."

When Taylor returned to his Parent's home, dinner was about ready. His favorite from when he was a kid was spaghetti with sausage and garlic bread. Dad brought home a bottle of wine. He bought it for me; Mom and Dad both no longer drank alcohol of any kind.

Dinner was a pleasant conversation about our day. I told them about my new job, which paid \$750 per month plus a 5% commission. They also gave me a Chevy company car. Dad said, "Well done, that's as much as I make as an engineer as of my last promotion." I said, "it looks like the Roberts are in the chips." We all laughed.

Blessing 8 - Getting to know the members of the "flying club."

I told them that as soon as possible, I wanted my own home; I knew I'd have to rent at first, but maybe not. I have two years of regular pay plus two years of combat duty pay. My Dad said, "How much is that?" I said, "It's a little over \$20,000, plus I have G.I. benefits for education, vocational training, the purchase of a home, and more."

Taylor said, "I'm inclined to rent first only because I've never lived anywhere as an adult besides Vietnam. And I'm definitely not buying or renting there." We all laughed.

The next night I was at the flying club. I met everyone. There was a good mix between my age and the next generation. The guys that fought in Korea and WWII.

We had a member of the Tuskegee Airmen that flew in the Red Tail Squadron from WWII. He's pretty crippled up, but he was a member of the first colored flyers squadron, the Tuskegee Airmen. It's a lot different today. I met one guy that's starting an express package service. He would get packages from one city to another to be delivered the next day. They're hiring, but I don't have a pilot's license for a fixed-wing. When I do, I'll explore my options then.

It's now Friday at 7 pm; time for our first date. Allison was even more beautiful than I remembered from our brief encounter at the party. I was so excited to see her. I had some terrific news to share with her. When I reached the door, she met me with tears and crying. Allison said, "Just a moment before I arrived, her Father passed quietly in bed." I said, "What can I do to help you or your family? Anything?"

It was another week before I could see her again. I took her to the Italian place out on Firestone. It was perfect. We spent hours talking about ourselves. I know I didn't pay attention or learn enough about her, but I was going to get another date next Friday. This time we would go to one of those fancy restaurants around the traffic circle in Long Beach.

Blessing 9 - I was actively dating Allison.

At dinner, I shared that I would be looking for a home to live in. I didn't want to stay at my Parent's place. I told her I was going out Monday evening to Thursday evening. I told her she could come with me if she wanted.

Every week, we learned more about each other. Every week, I felt I was getting closer to deciding where to rent or buy.

At work, I was doing well. I landed the specifications for two new multiple-floor buildings in L.A. Several months later, when construction began, they bought our products through one of my clients. The commission was substantial.

Blessing 10 - I had enough money to buy a home.

Chapter 3 - It's the grown up thing to do.

Allison lives in South Gate, and I was in Huntington Park. My company is in Bell, for now. My understanding is that the company will be moving to Long Beach.

Blessing 11 - I found a place to purchase a home.

All signs pointed toward the homes in and around Lakewood, CA. A 3 bedroom, two-car garage selling for \$12,000 to \$15,000. My commissions already eclipsed what I was making per year. I had enough money to buy one or two of those homes. I decided to stay with Max's company.

I started pilot training for single-engine aircraft. The whole process is much faster to pre-check and fly. Because of my experience and quickly catching on, I had my license in no time. After that, I decided to get rated for multiple engines. So, I received my rating after four months of flying practically every day.

Blessing 12 - Received my Pilots license for single and multiple-engine aircraft.

Allison and I saw each other often. We would take day trips to San Diego, Santa Barbara, Disneyland, Knox Berry Farm, the old Alligator ranch, and much more. My goal was for the two of us to know as much as possible about each other.

I thought of a way to do this more logically. We took a week off of dating and used that time to write down every question we had about the other. The only off-limits to questions was Vietnam. We decided to spend the weekend in Santa Barbara, in separate rooms. It would be just one night away; we would leave Saturday morning.

I told her at the outset that we shouldn't spend more time together if we're not compatible. After that, we had to be strong enough to go our separate ways.

Blessing 13 - We answered each other's questions. We're on the same page.

We made it through the gauntlet. On the way home, I told her I loved her. She was quick to respond; I love you as well. I thought the next step must be engagement.

It would be two more months before I proposed to her. She said yes immediately; I used the money from flight lessons to buy her a ring. It was a beautiful two-carrot diamond that she picked out.

Blessing 14 - We were committed to each other. We are in love.

Allison was at my home nearly every night. Typically, she'd leave around 9 pm. On this particular night, 9, then 10, and then 10:30 when she said, let's go to bed. Wow. We slipped out of

our clothes. Allison's amazing. We didn't get a lot of sleep that night. That was OK, I wasn't all that experienced, but it was great sex.

We set the date; one week before my birthday—September 15th. Allison worked as a Secretary for one of the big shots at Hughes; she was able to get the rest of the month off for our honeymoon.

We told our parents. They were all pleased. They couldn't understand why we waited so long when it was apparent we loved each other. All we could say is we prefer to set goals and challenges ourselves.

The wedding is 10 weeks away.

Allison and I decided to take the pilot opportunity a little slower. We have a great running start in life. So let's make sure we can contain it.

Chapter 4 - Making Changes

Blessing 15 - I'm successful enough that others want to hire me.

Work is good. I had accomplished more than any other salesman before me. I'm getting offers from competitors, the manufacturers we represent, and companies I never knew existed. It's great to be pursued. It's also very distracting.

The Wedding is now 9 weeks away.

Allison and her Mother have been taking care of the wedding plans—the venue, number of guests, cake, food, and of course, her dress. I'm working on a honeymoon destination, activities, and transportation.

Blessing 16 - Many people want to help plan, participate, or be there for us.

The Wedding is now 8 weeks away.

Allison and I now see each other daily; some days, she'll spend the night. In one of our most recent conversations, we discussed the honeymoon destination and transportation.

Allison, I've got a friend that I served with in Vietnam. His name is Carl Chappman. He collects old Cadillacs, restores them, and then uses them whenever he wants. He volunteered a 1940 Cadillac Series 75 Limousine for our delivery and getaway. So he'll provide the Limo and the Chauffeur.

Allison said, "I'm up for that; that's great that your friend would help us like that. Allison, "We both believe we owe each other a lot."

Do you want to get there by car, train, boat, or plane? She said, "Wait, don't we have to figure out where first?" That will work, I said. "Let me ask, where have you always wanted to go?" Allison thought about it while I patiently waited. I did not want to rush her into this vital decision.

Allison said, "Here are the places I would love to go to:

Niagara Falls, New York
England, London
Mexico, Cancun
Hawaii, The Big Island

"Now, Taylor, why don't you tell me where you would like to go," said Allison. "Well, of these, I think we would have the most fun in Hawaii. I know a lot of newly weds go there. So that's O.K., it will mean that destinations on the Island will be less."

I asked, "Do you want to get there by boat or plane?" Allison said, "Plane, please." O.K., by airplane it is. I'll book the flights and the hotel. Is that O.K. with you? "Yep," she said.

"How is everything else going?" Said Taylor. Allison said, "Mom and Dad seem fine with what they're spending." Did you tell them I would help? "Yes," she said. "I told them that you were making good money and that you and I don't mind helping." Dad said, "You're our only daughter; we want you to have what we didn't. It's your special day."

Blessing 17 - My Mother and Father-in-law want what is best for us.

The Wedding is now 4 weeks away.

Everything has been reserved, paid for, and selected, and now we have just a few weeks to prepare mentally. Allison approached Taylor and said, "Would it be O.K. if I redecorated our home so that we're ready for what's next as soon as we get back?"

That's a beautiful idea, Allison. Is that something you like to do, or is that just you saying someone has to do it? "No, it's all me. I love decorating, but I didn't want to overstep my bounds these weeks before our Wedding." Oh, Allison, you could never do that. We may not be married yet, but we already have a solid union. Don't you agree? "I love and respect you and all you've done in such a short time. Please, let me do this," Allison said. You got it, babe, it's all you, tell me what to buy.

Blessing 18 - My bride-to-be loves to decorate

The Wedding is now 2 weeks away.

Taylor is trying to get as many deals signed at work as possible. But, unfortunately, it will take each of the projects specified weeks or even months to purchase. When they do, that's when he receives the big bucks.

The Wedding is now 4 days away.

Taylor woke up at 5:30 am on a Monday. He opened the door, and it was his old friend Carl Chappman. "Carl, how are you?" "Well, I'm a little pushed for time. I have a staff meeting that starts in 20 minutes, and I'm thirty minutes from there. In your driveway is my wife's 1940 Cadillac Series 75 Limousine. Here are the keys. I suggest you pull it into your garage at some point. My chauffeur, George, will arrive per your schedule. You need to tell him your wedding day so he can be there with the Limo. He already has your address."

"Call me when you get the chance. Maria and I would love to go to dinner with you and your new bride." With that, he jumped into a new Cadillac and was off. I thought to myself, what a great guy. I hope I can be like him someday.

Blessing 19 - The benefit of not forgetting old friends.

At work, Taylor tries to wind down and assign what needs to be done to others. Unknown to Taylor is the resentment of the "golden boy." Sure he's a war veteran, but why is he so much better than us? They have yet to understand this in full.

On the day of the Wedding

The Wedding is at St. Anthony's at Noon. Allison's family will get picked up at 11:00 from her home. George picked up some fresh red roses, two dozen, to give her at the time he picked her up. Once their party is delivered to the church, George will pick up Taylor.

Taylor, his groomsmen, and her bridesmaids will already be in place by 11:50 am. Then, at 11:55 pm, Allison's Father will escort Allison down the aisle. Father Alturo will be officiating:

Father Alturo asks, who gives this woman to this man; Allison's Father says, "I do."

Father Alturo asks as this couple stands before this altar in front of friends and family, "Is there anyone that can give any reason why this nuptial should not go forth in this place."

Father Alturo says, "In preparation for this moment, I have previously met with both the bride and groom and them as a couple. I can say that this couple is uniquely made for each other. They have also shared that they have their own vows."

"Allison, please proceed." She said, "Taylor, I never really understood love at first sight until I saw you across the room. At that moment, it wasn't love as much as peace, knowing I'd found you. I promise to love, cherish, and support you and to be by your side until death do us part."

Father Alturo says, "Allison, do you have the ring?" Her bridesmaid steps forward with Taylor's ring. As she puts the ring on his finger, she says, with this ring, I thee wed.'

Taylor, please proceed. He said, "Allison, from the time I had a dream where I saw you as you stand now when I was age five, until I saw you across the room was sixteen years. I looked everywhere for you. All my worries and doubts about the future left my mind. I knew you were the one person I wanted to spend my life. Allison, I pledge to you that our family will always come first. You will come before any other family member; you are the

most important person in my life. I'll be there for you if we have hardship or quantum success. If our health is poor, I'll be by your side. I'll be with you until death do us part."

Father Alturo says, "Taylor do you have the ring?" Taylor turns to his best man Jud and then turns to Allison and says, "With this ring, I thee web."

Father Alturo then says, "I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss your bride. Please turn and face your friends and family. I present Mr. & Mrs. Richards."

Those in attendance gave a thunderous applause; some whistled. It was wonderful.

The reception was in the community center next to the church. As the Richards make their way over, tons of white rice are hurled into the air.

As everyone finds their name on a table, Harry, Taylor's Father, picks up a mic and says, "Welcome, everyone. On behalf of us as parents and the bride and groom, we want to thank you for being a part of Taylor and Allison's life. In a few minutes, we'll begin with a three-course American meal. Don't forget to leave room for the cake. Before we eat, the bride's Father and I will briefly speak."

Allison's dad says, "My wife and I have not looked forward to this day until right now as we see the love that these two have on their faces; who could deny them the marriage they each deserve?" "Allison, your Mother and I are so proud of you and the man you chose to be by your side. CONGRATULATIONS, Please raise your glass for a toast for long life and great happiness." You could hear a lot of glasses giving a toast. "Thank you, Harry, your turn."

Harry says, "Thank you. My wife and I would like to thank everyone here for the kindness that you've shown our son and daughter-in-law. We would like to especially thank Jud and his parents for the love, principles, and values they instilled in our son. Finally, we thank God that Taylor made it home safely. The reason is obvious, with his new bride at his side, they will make the lives of others mean much more than imagined. Taylor, you and Allison are a wonderful couple. We bless and congratulate you. Let's toast these kids again: To love, a long life, and your desire to serve others." Again, glasses clink. Harry says, "Let the feast begin."

Taylor and Allison are talking. Taylor asks, "Did you see the gifts on that table over there?" She says, "I did." "You know Carl called last night with another gift. He's asking George to remove all of the gifts and put them in our living room for when we return. And he will pay for his corporate jet to take us to and pick us up from our honeymoon. So he's given Captain Jim the

freedom to see to our needs on our honeymoon. He's expecting us at the Orange County Airport at 8:00 am. He will depart at 8:30 am. He said we should get there about lunchtime."

Allison turned to Taylor so that others couldn't listen. Taylor, how do you know Carl? We saved each other's lives in Vietnam. We're bonded in a way I hope you never understand. Is that enough?" She said, "Yes."

Harry stepped up to the mic and announced that it was time for the best man and bridesmaid to give a toast. Susan has been a long-time friend of Allison since they were in elementary school.

"I also wanted to congratulate Allison and Taylor. I've watched them together since the night they met. As Taylor walked directly to Allison, you could see the excitement in each other's eyes. After their meeting on the way home, he was all she talked about. I've seen new and old love, but I've never seen a love as strong as theirs. They are always on the same page. They get one another. So, congratulations, and I invite us all back for your 50th anniversary." Glasses make a noise. And now, Jud.

"Hello everyone, what a great afternoon in this sacred place where Allison and Taylor have exchanged their vows. Congratulations. I first met Taylor under a lovely tree on the side lawn of Huntington Park high school. I had noticed him for a week or so. He never looked anyone in the eyes. When I saw him sitting alone under the tree, I thought, this is a moment. I was so right. I sat down and introduced myself. We talked briefly, and I invited him to dinner with my Mom and Dad. Before he arrived, I shared his behavior with my parents."

"When Taylor arrived, he could feel that there was peace in our home. It was a safe place. My parents opened our home to Taylor as though he were my brother. We talked about family, love, devotion, and forgiveness. It wasn't long before he was in sync with our family. We lost track of each other when he and some other friends entered the Army. Those other friends gave their all. Taylor made it back despite the considerable odds against him. Here are a few things I've learned about him over the years. He's honest and a promise keeper; he'll help anyone he sees in need or asks for help. Honestly, besides my Father, he's the best man I know." To Taylor & Allison." Glasses clash.

Harry gets back on the mic. It's time to cut the cake and dance. Will the newlyweds please go on over to the cake table? Harry hands them the same knife; they cut, serve and put the cake on each other's faces.

After a short bit, the D.J. started playing a slow dance for Allison and her dad. It was beautiful; then everyone started to dance.

Allison said this was the perfect time to say goodbye and thank everyone for coming. You can tell them that a well-planned honeymoon was calling from a distance. Taylor rose, picked up the mic, and said. "I've dreamt of this day since I was five years old. Our friends and family did not disappoint. From the bottom of our hearts, we sincerely thank you for attending, for your kind gifts, and for being our friends and family. And now, I hear our honeymoon calling our names. Thank you all."

George was watching, he opened the door, and then Allison turned and threw the bouquet. Then she turned and popped into the beautiful Cadillac limo. As they drove off, you could hear the tin cans rattling. George went a mile or so before disconnecting the cans.

At home, they asked George if he could bring the gifts by tomorrow after they were gone and just put them in the living room. George said, "I will be at your door at 7:15 am tomorrow. I'll take you to Mr. Chappman's private jet." "Thank you, George," said Allison. She said, "Taylor, give this man a nice tip." George said, "I'm sorry, I do not take tips." Please enjoy your evening."

The day, their day, was now drawing to a close. 7:15 am is pretty early.

Blessing 20 - I married the woman of my dreams.
Blessing 21 - I have a friend named Carl Chappman.

Chapter 5 - Life Begun

The love birds returned to their home at about midnight. There they were all their presents. They didn't care. All they saw was the master bedroom. They were exhausted. The Wedding gifts will put here tomorrow, they can wait until after our honeymoon.

They had agreed not to make plans or discuss business until they were back from their honeymoon. However, on Sunday morning (the last day of their honeymoon), Taylor called Carl and Maria. "Hello Carl, is Maria there as well? Great. Guys, I'd like to introduce my wife, Allison. We want both of you to know how great our honeymoon was because of the two of you. What a time we had. I doubt we could ever duplicate that rich experience."

Carl said, "As you know, Taylor, you and I will forever share a bond as few people do. I owe my life to you." Taylor said, "I owe mine to you. I'm sure our wives are grateful." Carl said, "I adopted Maria's son Carlo. I would never have had a son if it hadn't been for you. So, if you need anything, please don't hesitate to ask." Taylor and Allison said, "thank you." Carl and Maria said, "You're very welcome."

Blessing 22 - Carl and I will forever have each other's back.

Allison was going to look for work after she finished getting everything settled up and into a routine.

Taylor went off to see how his work life had changed, if at all.

At the front door, Taylor was greeted by the owner's son, Max Jr. He said, "My dad passed away while you were gone. The business is now mine. We need to talk frankly with one another. Are you free for an early lunch?" Taylor said, "Absolutely, lead the way."

Max said, "How was the honeymoon in Hawaii?" Taylor said, "Amazing, an old friend of mine, Carl Chappman, gave me his jet, pilot, co-pilot, and Steward at our disposal."

"Taylor, you have a reputation for being straightforward and honest. I intend to be the same. Dad and I spoke of you nearly every day before he passed. Dad had the attorney draw up paper to give you a full partnership with him or me. Its only provision is a \$100,000 buy-in deducted at an agreed amount from commissions paid over a five-year period.

In addition, we'll split the net profits generated every quarter. Of the profits, fifty percent goes back into the business to expand, grow inventory or take advantage of a situation. So you and I will split the other fifty percent, with 25% going to you and the other 25% going to me."

"All checks written or withdrawals made will require both our signatures. I want your thoughts on how we divide responsibilities for operations."

Taylor said, "Your father was a kind man." Max said, "He especially admired your courage flying Helos in Vietnam." "Taylor, I'm O.K. with this. I've also done a lot of thinking about responsibilities."

Max said, "Taylor, my proficiencies are in finance and operations. I want to suggest you be the President and C.E.O. .I'll be the C.O.O. handling the day-to-day operations, including H.R.,

inventory, and supervision of our C.F.O. to be hired. As President, you'll be the person outside and inside the company. You'll be responsible for outside and inside sales and all training. Have no doubt you'll run our company, and I will be half-owner." Taylor said, "If I may, we had a routine in Vietnam to keep everyone informed. I'll teach you, and together we can modify it as necessary."

Taylor said, "Do the other employees know about this?" Yes and No, said Max. "They knew what my dad and I were planning to do but not the details," said Max. Taylor asked, "How many employees do we have?" Max said, "Seventy-five at last count." Taylor asked, "Do we have a full accounting of bank accounts, investments, and inventory?" Max said, "yes". Taylor asked, "Do you have a copy of the Agreement?" Max said, "Yes, we do, Taylor. I have this massive bundle of documents for you to review before signing. I suggest you take the rest of the day off, and we'll reconvene here in your office tomorrow at 4 pm. I'll have our corporate attorney and my wife Betty here to answer any other questions you may have." Taylor said, "If I need more time, can I have it?" Max didn't hesitate. "Yes, you can. Just let me know."

Taylor left the building and couldn't feel the ground under his feet. He wanted to jump up and say, "Of course, I will. I'm not stupid." Instead, he stopped at a pay phone and called two people. Allison and Carl. He asked if they would both have dinner with Maria at Scotts (Maria's favorite place). He asked Allison to call for 5:30 reservations.

Upon arrival, Taylor said, "I want us to agree that Allison and I will pick up the tab. Secondly, this conversation is confidential. Everyone agrees?" Everyone did.

Over the next three hours, they talked, dined, had a few drinks, and discussed the possibilities. Another hour and they were all on their way home. Carl asked that he be allowed to review the P&L, cash flow analysis, and future forecast. He and Taylor would meet at Carl's place at 6 am.

Blessing 23 - An unexpected business opportunity

Allison and Taylor were up half the night discussing the deal. On the surface, it seemed the document was as Max said it was. They did some planning. It looked like Allison wouldn't be going to work for anyone else. Taylor wanted to use her as his personal assistant.

Taylor, Carl, and Carl's corporate attorney met at 6 am in Carl's office. Carl spoke first.

"Taylor, you must have made quite an impression on Max (the dad). At face value, this is what Max said it is. The cash reserves are over \$2 M. The net profit is around 25% across the board.

Based on what I'm seeing, your income would be around \$125 to \$150 K per year, plus your salary, perks, and a company car. I'd like to have our Sr. Corporate counsel attend the meeting as your attorney. What do you think?"

"So, to be clear," Taylor said, "You're in favor of doing this?" "Absolutely, and when it's all signed and sealed, we should talk further. Deal?" "Yes, it is; thank you, Carl." "I don't know how to repay you." Carl said, "Taylor, I've already figured all that out."

That afternoon, they all meet in the President's office as agreed. The six of them met to discuss the deal further.

Max said, "Welcome, everyone; given our number, let's move to the conference room, shall we." After all appropriate introductions were made, Max turned to his corporate counsel. Max added, "Taylor, you were mentioned in my father's will. Paul was also my Father's attorney."

He said, "Hello, everyone; in Max Sr's will, the following directly refers to you, Taylor. The will says: Taylor, I've enjoyed our friendship. I'm leaving my plane and its parking space to you. I also hope you'll take the deal my son shared with you. I believe the two of you will make outstanding partners. That's all."

Taylor said, "Max, you don't fly?" "I do not and will not." Taylor said, "O.K., I will accept Max Sr.'s gift and the responsibility for annual upkeep and expenses when the plane is not used for company purposes."

"Max, I'm prepared to discuss and potentially accept the offer made by you and your Father. Out of curiosity, who suggested this plan? Was it you or your Dad?" Max said, "I'm so glad you asked. I had initially discussed it with my Dad, and he and the attorney expanded it to the offer before you. I proposed it because I wanted to see my Dad's company live on. I don't believe I have the necessary skills to take this company further. Your ability to sell and work with people made you the logical choice."

"Thank you, Max."

Taylor was satisfied, and they talked for a short while. There were a few minor points that needed clarification. Taylor took the documents and signed them. Just like that, Taylor became the President. "Congratulations, Taylor, we'll make a fine Team." Everyone was happy. Allison liked Betty. Max said, "Mr. President and C.E.O., what is your first order of business?"

"Please have Martha, our receptionist, call all the salespeople to ensure they are here for an 8 am meeting tomorrow morning. Next, with your approval Max, I'd like to hire my wife as my personal assistant. Do you approve?" Max said, "Wow, already you've come up with something I didn't think of." "What will be her salary?" Taylor said, "H.R. is your department; what will you pay her?" Max said, "Of course, let's go with \$30 K plus and our standard benefits package. Let me ask Max, do you have an assistant? I do not, Max said. For the next few months, let's share her. Then, when it's too much work for her, we'll get you a full-time assistant. Allison, is that acceptable to you?" She said, "Yes, that's acceptable." "Great said Max; let's have you start tomorrow at 8 am."

With that, everything was done. Everyone shook hands, and the women hugged. The deal was solid and will benefit all parties.

Blessing 24 - I now own fifty percent of Evans Distribution

So far, nine months have elapsed in the year that was my best year ever.

Chapter 6 - The President

It's 8:00 am on Wednesday. All of the employees have been accounted for and now it's time for Max to address the group.

"Good morning everyone. How was the coffee and donuts this morning?" Lots of applause. "As you all know, my dad's passing came as a shock to all of us. However, before Taylor got married, Dad and I were working on a succession plan that would ensure that all of you have a job here at Evans. So, I'll be stepping away from the leadership as you know it. Please allow me to introduce Taylor Roberts as our new President and CEO. Taylor, please come up here." Lots of strong clapping, yelling and applause. "Taylor, Congratulations, my father and I both felt this would be a great move if you would accept it. Congratulations."

“Well, when I returned from my honeymoon, Max presented this to me. Last night I signed all of the paperwork. I’d like to introduce my wife, Allison Richards. I’ve asked Allison to be my Executive Assistant. Thanks Allison.” More applause.

“As President, it’s my privilege to serve you. As a leader I have a sacred and moral responsibility for you work life and your personal success. Over the next few weeks, I’ll interview everyone so that I get to know all of you. Let me state from the outset, there will be no layoffs and no one will get fired. Instead, when we talk, I hope to garner your support. I recognize that you don’t know much about me. If, any of you aren’t comfortable with this change, there will be NO repercussions. We also give you two months severance and a nice referral letter signed by our new C.O.O., Max.”

“Nine months ago I turned 21 and on that day I returned from Vietnam, safe and alive. I was a Helo pilot while I was in the Army. Max Sr. gave me the chance to sell and I did pretty well. There are now seventy-six souls that I’m responsible for here at Evans. As a Warrant Officer I never had more than fifteen men and women that worked directly for me at any given time. However, I was able to bring everyone home except for one person. I’ve always felt, I failed him. I take this new position very seriously. Every Monday morning there will be a meeting like this, right here.”

“Afterwards I’ll want to meet with our six man sales team for an hour from 9:00 am to 10:00 am on Mondays.” I’d like to thank Max Sr and Jr. and all of you for this opportunity to serve. Thanks for now. Everything goes on just like it has for many years. See you all next Monday. Have a blessed day.”

Max Jr. and Taylor retired to Max Sr. old office. Taylor says, “I think you. Would you agree that we both know there needs to be some changes made. Am I right?” Max said, “of course.” You’re a smart guy and I’m certain you know a number of things that you want to change. I have some things as well. I’m going to leave for the day to take care of some personal business. Can we meet at 8:00 am tomorrow for the purpose of discussing changes to be made. does that work for you?” O.K. that’s great. I’ll see you in the morning.

At home, Taylor and Allison realize that they need to take a minute and contemplate their new life.

Chapter 7 - The balance of the best year ever.

Taylor's new reality begins next Monday at 8:00 am. Until then, there's additional work to be done. It's Thursday morning. Taylor places a call to Carl Chappman.

"Hey Carl, thank you again for having my back. I think there ought to be a way to repay you for everything you've done for me." Carl said, "I'm glad you asked. Let's go to lunch somewhere; why don't you show up at my office at 11:30. We'll have George take us to lunch at the Yacht Club. Good for you?" "Yes, that works for me. See you then."

At the Yacht Club, they asked for a private room. Once they were in, Carl told the hostess, this is perfect. Please have the server bring two menus. It seemed like only moments before the server showed up with menus. Carl asked Taylor, "How hungry are you?" Taylor said, "A lite lunch works for me." Carl said, "I know you trust me. He told the server to bring them a charcuterie of meats, cheeses, and a few cashews. For drinks, I'll have a double Scotch." Taylor? He said, coke for me.

Carl said, "Taylor, where can Evans sell?" Taylor said, "As far as I know, as long as we ship from here or drop ship from the factory, we're good." Carl said, we have jobs requiring some of your equipment worldwide. I took the time to stop by purchasing before coming over here. They tell me they have bought from Evans before, but the inside sales group never fulfilled the order correctly."

Taylor said, "Are you trying to tell me I've made a mistake or have some problems to fix?" Carl said, "Problems. Here's my real point. Currently, we have over \$5,000,000 in products that Evans can provide. I'm prepared to give you that business in exchange for a discount like 10% off and terms of 30 days net." Taylor said, "Carl, you know I'll do that. I also think there are other ways in which we could help you. They will come up over time. I want a solid working relationship at our level." Taylor smiled and said, "Absolutely." The two men finished their lunch.

Taylor called Max to ensure he would be at the company in an hour. He said yes, so Taylor went over.

In private, Taylor asked, "How much gross business did Evans do the year before last? And last year? Also, what are we on track to earn this year?"

Max said, "The year before last, it was \$2.1 M. Last years gross was \$2.6 in a bad market. We're on track to do about \$2.7 or more this year. What happened?" "Max, when I bring business in personally, is it your understanding that I will still receive my 5% commission?" Without hesitation, Max said, "Yes. The point is that we can get to the next level under your leadership. "Taylor, what are you thinking?"

"Do you know who Carl Chappman is?" Max said, "I've only heard of him. Why?" Taylor sat back in his chair and said, "I've just received an order for \$5 M. I gave him a permanent discount of 10% and agreed to 30 days, net. So, net, it will be a \$4.5 M sale. My commission will be \$225,000 K. I'll put in the \$100 K buy-in from that sale. That will leave me with \$125,000. I propose that for all business from Carl Chapman, the commission of 5% will be split between you and me. Deal?"

Max said, "Dad said you would be a great partner. So yes, I think it's a great idea."

You and I can go over to see Carl on Monday if he's going to be there" We'll meet the purchasing agent and come home with an order. Sound good?" Max said, "You're even better than Dad suggested." Taylor said, "Thanks, Max."

Blessing 25 - He has a Partner that he can trust.

On Monday, they arrived at 1 pm to meet with Carl. The introductions were made, and then Carl said some nice things about Taylor that others wouldn't know. Taylor said, "You talked about products you need that, at present, we don't have. If you tell us what you're looking for, we might be able to do more business together. Thoughts?" Carl said, Taylor, come by on Monday at this same time, and we'll meet with the head of our purchasing department.

Max said, "Thank you, Carl." He said, "It's my great pleasure to help you as others have helped me. So let us keep that tradition alive?" Max and Taylor both said, "Absolutely."

Back at Evans, Taylor proposed a celebratory dinner with wives. Max called Betty, while Taylor called Allison.

Blessing 26 - In a single day, they had doubled their business.

When they finished the balance of time to the end of Taylor's Best Year Ever, he solidly received twenty-six blessings. There were many more on a smaller scale. He was now half-owner of a successful business. He got the girl; bonus, they are expecting their first child (another blessing).

Take time to review each blessing, then ask yourself about your blessings. Start counting.

Blessings Discovered

Why list the blessings' that Taylor has received?

Unless you were in Vietnam, it's almost impossible to describe the horrors of that war. Our fictional character Taylor is actually a metaphor to share the concept of blessings. As the author, I can tell you I was there. Compared to the number of Helo pilots that were trained vs the ones that made it back. Those that returned are a very small percentage.

Taylor, is sharing his recognized blessings. Have you received a blessing in your life? Maybe you do all the time but without a bit of training, you fail to recognize how blessed we all are. I sincerely hope this small story will help you to "count your many blessings."

Be blessed,

DR Rawson - The Possibilist

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