

Preface

Very little in our lives is more important and more pervasive than our relationships with those we care about and with whom we work. And very little is more inscrutable and problematic. Relationships can be as taxing and toxic as they can be replenishing and fulfilling.

“When in doubt—tell the truth,” Mark Twain advised. Well, everything you are about to read is true. It all actually happened—to the best of my recollection. Unfortunately, my recollection of life with others over these many years is a bit blurry. So this is probably not *just* as it was, but rather the way I *remember* it was—a kind of impressionistic painting. Allow me some poetic license in writing, and I shall allow you the same in reading.

The details don’t really matter that much, anyway. What matters is that our experiences carry with them astonishing learning. These stories, aged in my soul’s cask over the years, are idiosyncratic, perhaps even peculiar. Yet they express metaphors and teachings that are universal and lasting for me—and perhaps useful for you. They are offered in hope that each of us may find abundant and buoyant joy in our all-too-brief passages with one another.

Welcome aboard!

—Roland S. Barth
Tavernier, Florida
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