

**STATUS: CRITICAL UPDATE**

**TOPIC: Who's Packing Your Parachute?**

**DESCRIPTION:** One of my heroes in life was a guy by the name of Charles Plumb. I heard him speak at a conference many years ago. He had been a Navy Fighter Pilot in Vietnam, and after 75 missions, he was shot down, captured by the North Vietnamese army, and spent the last six years plus of the war, as a POW.

His story of isolation, depression, and what separation from other POWs (I.e. Social Distancing) did to his mental state was unnerving. Like other prisoners, he considered all sorts of terminal decisions but in the end, he realized, that in order to beat the enemy, he needed to reprogram his own thinking about his new temporary normal. He lived for the day he could see his family again, enjoy the freedom in the USA again, and to live the life he knew was available.

So, why am I writing this article, and why the goofy title? Let me share more of Capt. Plumb's story. A few years after the Viet Nam war ended, and the POW's were returned, Charlie was enjoying a nice dinner with his wife. A complete stranger approached his table to confirm that he was in fact, Charlie Plumb. Charlie responded that he was and how did this man know. The man's response?

"Because I'm the one who packed your parachute!"

Suddenly, all the things that Capt. Plumb was now enjoying, was all due to the incredible job that this "ordinary" parachute packer, had done more than decade earlier. In a very specific way, this man literally saved Plumb's life.

Think about it, "Who packs your parachute?" In other words, who provides a way for you to be at your best? Who packs your mental strength through their love for you, their belief in you? Who allows you to enjoy the fruits of your labor today?

When I look at these questions, I first think of my wife. Married to Jeannie now for more than thirty-eight years, she "packs my parachute" every day in her believing in me, trusting me, accepting me as I am. And that's important stuff.

I next look to my kids. Ya, I know I participated in creating them, but they still "pack my parachute" by loving me, still letting me give them advice now and then, and they have rewarded me with grandchildren...a great mental lift for tough times.

Next, I'd have to say is Pavecon. Yes, Pavecon. They have "packed my parachute" by allowing me to work for the best construction company in the industry. They've provided me the opportunity to use all my resources to do what I love to do...write, teach, encourage, lead, and coach construction leaders to be their best. It is a privilege I hold close.

OK, back to reality for a moment. Let's be honest, this "social distancing" stuff just sucks. BUT we know that we need to protect ourselves, our loved ones at home, and our co-workers. So, while we are in a very small way, **COVID19 "POWs,"** we will continue to comply and follow every recommendation, knowing and believing that this COVID19 enemy will soon fall.

And along the way, think about how you might really demonstrate your love and appreciation for that first person who packs your parachute. Determine to spend some extra time with your spouse, and talk about how much you appreciate them, and make some plans for what you can do together once we've been given our "release."

***Take care of those who "pack your parachute." And thank them!***

Here's to all those who "Pack our Parachutes" in life...starting with our families.

May we look to "Pack the Parachute" of someone who needs some positive encouragement from a co-worker or friend.

Be Safe,



Brad Humphrey