



FROM MIKE COONEY & THE KEEPERS OF THE VINE

MAY 2010

# Lessons from Geese

There's much we can learn from nature ... about life and death, architecture, or whether it'll rain tomorrow ... about solar energy, finding north in the bush, or south from the stars. Or how about the fact you can't get an apple from an orange tree ...?

There are plenty of things waiting to be discovered in the outdoors, and one of the coolest things I've seen, was a fantastic TV ad made a number of years ago by Saatchi and Saatchi. Sure, I wasn't in the wilderness when I saw it, but you'll get the drift! Simply called *Lessons From Geese* (do you remember it?), it featured close-up shots of geese flying in formation to a pretty cool soundtrack.

Anyway, the video clip showed five different facts about geese and the lessons we can learn from them. And as they make interesting reading - and relate nicely to Grapevine - I thought I'd share them with you ...

NOTE: The original *Lessons from Geese* was written in 1972 by Dr Robert McNeish - a science teacher from Baltimore. He'd been intrigued with observing geese for many years, and first wrote the piece for a sermon he delivered for his church. Now isn't that interesting!

**Fact 1:** As each goose flaps its wings it creates an 'uplift' for the birds that follow. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying

range than if each bird flew alone.

**Lesson:** People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they're going quicker and easier because they're travelling on the thrust of one another.

**Fact 2:** When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

**Lesson:** If we have as much sense as a goose, we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We're willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

**Fact 3:** When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

**Lesson:** It pays to share leadership and take turns doing the hard tasks. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

**Fact 4:** The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those in front to keep up their speed.

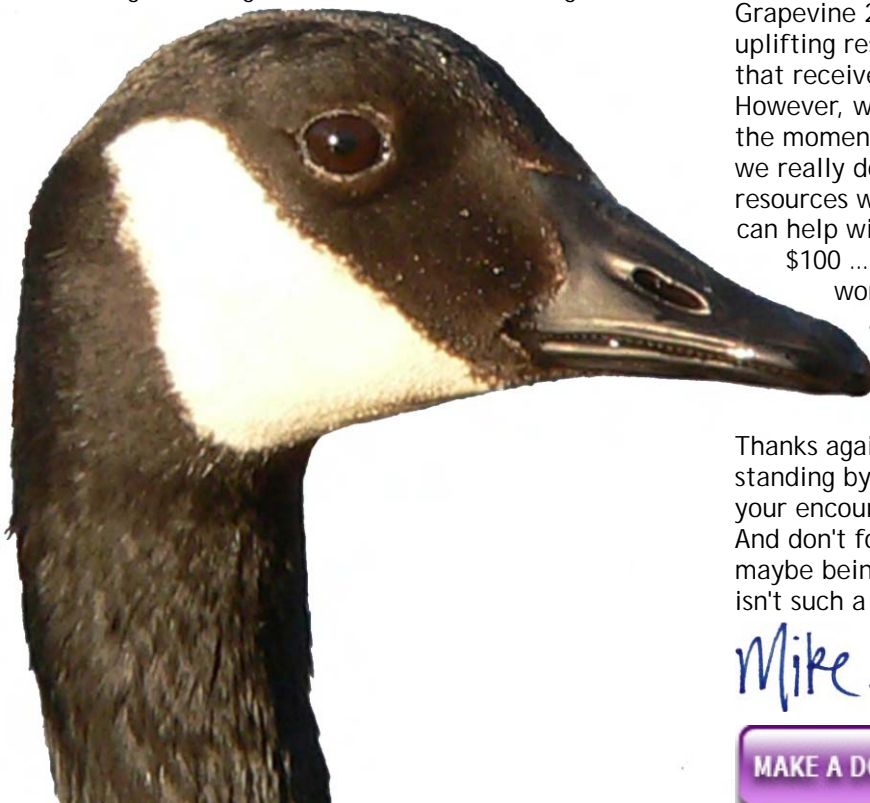
**Lesson:** We need to make sure honking is encouraging. In groups where there's lots of encouragement the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek.

**Fact 5:** When a goose gets sick, wounded, or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

**Lesson:** If we have as much sense as geese, we'll stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we're strong.

Now, it's all pretty self-explanatory - but there are some lovely parallels between what we're doing with Grapevine, and what you're doing to help us - particularly with the support that you give us during these more difficult times!

But one lesson that personally stands out for me is Lesson 4. There's something about human nature that loves encouragement - maybe even craves it! And it makes no difference whether you're young or old, male or female, rich or poor - we *all* respond well to 'quality honking'! And for us here at Grapevine? We're no different. We love getting those encouraging letters, those heartening emails and those generous gifts - all of which encourage



our heart and core, and strengthen our resolve to keep going.

**So can I encourage YOU ... to keep encouraging US ... so we can encourage OTHERS?** It's amazing how it all works when you think about it, right? The simple fact is: we can't do this without you. Your support is vital and not just financially!

We've got another great magazine on the drawing boards. The cover story - "**SCARED OF DYING?**" - is a thought-provoking interview with Mitch Albom (author of 'Tuesdays With Morrie'). Death and dying is one subject most people would rather ignore, deny, refuse to talk about it and hope it will go away. How come the subject upsets us so much? What exactly are we scared of? How important is it that we talk about these subjects - with our kids? - with our ageing parents? And what difference might those conversations make?

The new mag also carries an interview with echoes of that old children's song: "Jesus loves the little children ... all the **CHILDREN OF THE WORLD** ..." We ask Steve Tollestrup (director of Tear Fund NZ) what exactly's going on, globally, with the world's poor and needy - especially the kids? With all the aid that's given, are we really making a difference? How can we get our focus more off ourselves and onto those who are less fortunate? Why should we even bother? Haven't we got enough problems in our own back yard to worry about?

Grapevine 2/2010 will be yet another high-value, uplifting resource - and the 160,000 Kiwi families that receive this mag will benefit, for sure. However, we're still a little behind the eight-ball at the moment with a \$12,000 budget shortfall - and we really don't want to hit winter without the resources we need to keep pushing ahead! If you can help with a generous May donation of \$50 ...

\$100 ... \$1,000 ... \$whatever! ... it WILL make a world of difference and help us stay airborne.

Thanks again for standing by us and for your encouragement. And don't forget - maybe being a goose isn't such a bad thing!

Mike ...

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