

## I dare you!

**By Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey**

Remember growing up and being dared to do something? Remember how often you actually accomplished it, in spite of your own self doubts and fears? Well, I want to share a big DARE. But first, let me tell you the quick story of a young man named Bill, who responded to a personal DARE and changed his world and perhaps ours as well.

Bill was not a healthy boy; in fact you might even have called him 'sickly'. His family moved from the country to the city where he encountered a teacher who was serious about health. As he wrote later, *'It was like he had singled me out.'* His teacher, George Krall challenged him one day. He looked straight at Bill and said, *"I dare you to be the healthiest boy in class!"*

Young Bill responded and soon built a body that equaled and outlasted the strongest boys in his class. In fact, he never lost a day at work because of illness and lived a healthy and productive life. He served honorably during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and returned to lead his fledgling company to greater success and profit during the great depression. He passed away in 1955, at 85, when the average life expectancy was a good 20 years lower, in part because he responded to that dare.

Bill launched a company which grew to be one of North America's largest corporations, providing employment for thousands of people. People who were challenged or dared by their president and later Chairman of the Board to push themselves to be strong, to be creative, to take risks, to build character, and to share with others. For nearly 40 years, Bill wrote a weekly inspirational *"Monday Morning Message"* for his employees, colleagues and associates.

In a 1955 Monday Morning Message, when he was 84, he pointed out the personal significance of some of these unchanging fundamentals. *"Some folks are continually making changes,"* he said. *"I flatter myself that I like new ventures and new experiences. But when it comes to fundamentals, I believe in finding the right foundations and building on them. I'm a poor changer. For instance, here are some of the fundamentals I have never changed: I have been a church member for over 60 years; married to one wife for over 60 years; a lodge member for over 60 years; and a Purina man for over 60 years."*

Young Bill in this story is, of course, William H. Danforth, founder of the Ralston Purina Company, founder of the American Youth Foundation Camps, and author of 14 books including, "I Dare You!"

The copy I bought in 1976 was in its 26<sup>th</sup> printing. Bill Danforth's life and his writings have challenged hundreds of thousands (*including me*) to live life as an adventure and to stretch and grow in our careers and in our service to others.

I want to leave you with the following personal challenge:

**I Dare You:**

- To believe in yourself, your experience, and your skills
- To push yourself to learn and hone your skills for greater success
- To take at least one course every quarter to enhance your skills
- To take increased responsibility and personal leadership in your role
- To tap into your creativity and allow innovation to flow
- To support and encourage your fellow team members to grow
- To never allow anyone or anything to stop you from succeeding in your role and in life.

And I dare you to be the example for others in living life as an adventure and pushing past your comfort zone into the winner's zone.

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