



STEADFAST FREEDOM YOGA

June 12, 2001: 22 Years Old – Corporate America Life: The eyes are smiling but is the heart? Northern Virginia

The eyes are smiling but is the heart? -African proverb

Greetings from Northern Virginia! **Life here in suburbia, where they cut down all the trees and name the streets after them, is just dandy.** Tomorrow, June 13th, is my birthday. Birthdays are a fine time to reflect on the past year, and modify goals for the forthcoming months. With this objective in mind, I decided to finally write down some thoughts about my transition to submersion in Corporate American life.

I do have a birthday wish: That people be kind and compassionate both in words and actions. May all of your hearts smile with joy and light. Om shanti shanti shanti.

My career at Accenture is both challenging and rewarding. Working with talented people from various backgrounds stimulates my mind in novel ways. The atmosphere can be intense at times, but this is expected when you put an enormous group of super motivated and brilliant individuals together. Each person's determination to be the best performer possible is noticeable through the rigorous work ethic. It is enjoyable to see people so passionate about their work, but it is evident that the tradeoffs with the pleasures of life can be overbearing. **I question how success is measured.** "If you win the rat race, you're still a rat." -Anna Quindlen

My particular role is quite intriguing. I am working on a proposal for the Defense Logistics Agency to redesign their entire supply chain methodologies. When I entered the government market unit, I made it clear that I would be content to participate in any type of work, **excluding** defense projects. I anticipated working with housing and urban development or education, but I quickly learned to expect the unforeseen. **My morals and ethics were challenged when I was informed I would be staffed on a project that essentially makes our military more potent than they already are.** What exactly is supply chain logistics I inquired? "Well, basically it involves distribution of anything ranging from nuclear weapons and bullets to office supplies." This answer posed many new questions. **Did I want to turn my back and run from the challenge of dealing with the military, war, and other things that are contradictory to the peaceful existence that I choose to observe? I detest war! Make love not war.** That's what I was thinking while we were discussing the 40-60 million dollar price tag that we are

going to charge for the job. **I wanted to escape and meditate under a tree. I needed Time to contemplate whether dedicating my energy to something that I feel so strongly against would be beneficial or detrimental to my spiritual development.** The hours clicked away and before I could think any more thoughts, or do any more yoga practices, I was submersed in meetings discussing espionage and weapons distribution during wartime. After two weeks on the project I had worked one hundred and sixty hours and my lungs were becoming adjusted to breathing recycled office air.

“Real life is all I know. Don't ever confuse the two, your life and your work. The second is only part of the first.”

“So here's what I wanted to tell you today: get a life. A real life, not a manic pursuit of the next promotion, the bigger paycheck, the larger house. Do you think you'd care so very much about those things if you blew an Aneurysm one afternoon, or found a lump in your breast?” -Anna Quindlen

Sometimes I enjoy the ethical challenges presented by the new job. **I feel the difficult daily questions I pose to myself make me stronger. As I am forced to turn inward and truly examine my morals and values, I can recreate goals and explore my purpose here on Earth.**

I decided that because each person is put at a certain place in time for a reason, I would look the challenge in the third eye, and try to learn as much as possible from the experience. I listened to the wind of my soul. Now I am enjoying my work and even the commute. **I dance in my car on the way to work while driving in the traffic. I burn incense and ignore the smells of the gas guzzling car fumes. I do Yoga stretches in my cube, and take a walk everyday to clear my mind.**

In regard to the Buddhist conception of duty (yi):

If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character

If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home

If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation

If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

February 24, 2003 Mike L. (Accenture Manager) Letter of Recommendation for Peace Corps

Section 1: Motivation and Commitment

From your knowledge, please give an example of a significant commitment that the applicant has fulfilled

Jordan has recently assisted me with a reorganization of our communications team. This represented a major change for the team, and involved a significant commitment on Jordan's part to see it through to fruition. In creating this reorganization, Jordan was

challenged with setting a new strategy for the group, working closely with group members to help them understand their new roles, modeling the new ways that we wanted the team to work, and balancing the different personalities on the team. Doing all of this required an enormous amount of time and energy. However, Jordan really impressed me with his determination to make this change a success, and his commitment, in both time and effort, to see the task through to completion.

Express your concerns, if any, about the applicant's ability to fulfill a commitment:

I have absolutely no concerns about Jordan's ability to fulfill a commitment. He is exceptionally dedicated and reliable.

Section II: Work Skills and Knowledge

Describe how the applicant has demonstrated the above behaviors (Provided leadership/supervision, worked under minimal supervision, been a self starter, worked with limited resources and equipment.

I recently asked Jordan to serve as the team lead for a new business process, Technical and Quality, that we are implementing at the Department of Defense. In this new role, Jordan leads a team of four Change Management practitioners. Jordan does not have a background in this particular process, but he agreed to give it a shot. He immediately organized the team, established roles and responsibilities, set expectations with the appropriate stakeholders, and strove to achieve quick results. Although his expertise was limited, he connected with the right people to identify training opportunities so that he could most quickly come up to speed. He has done all of this with minimal supervision, and although he is the most junior team lead, his team has become the model for the others.

Two things in particular stood out about Jordan's working style:

Jordan was able to take an ill-defined task, structure an approach, find resources, and establish relationships to quickly achieve results.

Jordan has no formal authority over his team (being a Junior member). However, he leads by influence, and by the example he sets. His team follows his lead because they respect him, because he communicates clearly, and because he has directed them toward a common desirable goal.

Section III: Social Sensitivity

Describe how the applicant has worked with people of different backgrounds:

Jordan is a very flexible person, and demonstrates a remarkable ability to work with people of different backgrounds. Our project is a combination of two organizations with very strong cultures – Accenture, and the Department of Defense. The Accenture culture is extremely fast-paced, aggressive, and short-term project focused. The government culture is much more laid back, social, and long-term focused. These strong, and very

different, cultures frequently cause clashes among team members. However, Jordan is extremely facile at working with individuals from each culture. His warmth and down-to-earth style has endeared him to our government clients. At the same time, his professionalism and hard-working attitude makes him a valued member of the Accenture team as well.

Jordan's outlook, background, and even his hairstyle, are anomalous for Accenture, which is a very buttoned-down organization. However, his ability to be effective within the Accenture culture, and within our client's culture has made him a consistently highly rated member of his work teams.

Section IV: Emotional Maturity

B. Describe how the applicant has handled a difficult situation, requiring any of the above abilities.

This is a particularly difficult time on our work project, as costs are being more tightly controlled, and a number of people are being asked to leave. That is causing two stressful side effects: 1. facing the same workload with fewer resources; and 2. handling friends and teammates who are being asked to leave the project. Both of these directly affect Jordan, who has close associates leaving the project, and who has been the recipient of an increased workload as a result. While many people at Jordan's level would be frustrated and resentful, Jordan has coped with the situation extraordinarily well. His strong sense of compassion, and valued relationships with teammates has allowed him to counsel those who are leaving, and rally those who are staying. Despite our increased workload, Jordan has been excellent at determining the highest priority activities so that we can focus on those activities that deliver the maximum value to our clients.

Section V: Additional Comments

Describe notable abilities, interests, skills, or experiences of the applicant relevant to Peace Corps service:

As Jordan's Manager at Accenture, I cannot speak to the many experiences that he has had in service roles both in the U.S. and abroad. I can only attest to his professional experience and skills. However, I am certain that the work Jordan performs at Accenture would be extremely applicable to service in the Peace Corps. Accenture's work is entirely project-based. In his role, Jordan has worked on many facets of a project life-cycle, including planning work, building a team, running meetings, planning communications, identifying risks, and monitoring budgets.

Jordan is extremely organized, and is excellent at keeping a team working according to plan. As I am much less organized, I rely on Jordan to maintain our plans, identify action items for our team members, and ensure that the team meets its regular commitments. I am sure that Jordan's project experience, and particular skill at project management, would serve him well in the Peace Corps.

May 6, 2003 Accenture Farewell

Greetings Friends and Colleagues,

As Mother Nature blesses us with seasonal changes, I am also blessed with beautiful transitions in my life. With a deep appreciation for the experiences, friendships, and learning that the Accenture environment has provided, I share with you my decision to resign from the firm effective this Friday, May 9th. As I reflect on my two plus years at the firm, I continue to value and appreciate my Accenture colleagues for your business intelligence, motivation, and constant uncompromising drive. I have both professionally and personally gained new perspectives, insights, and knowledge from each of you for which I give thanks.

I am extremely excited about this life evolution as my heart tells me it is time to pursue my deep passion for service learning and join the Peace Corps. Serving as a Peace Corps volunteer will enable me to continue to advance international understanding, work effectively in multicultural environments, and strive to motivate others to join together and encourage positive social change.

Prior to leaving for my 2.3 years of service in the Peace Corps in August, I have decided to take two additional yoga teacher trainings. The first training will be a weeklong program and the second will be a one month long intensive program at an ashram in upstate NY. I hope you will join me sometime soon for yoga class!

I wish each of you continued personal and professional success. Happy Journey!

Jordan

To close, I will share some timely words from the fourteenth century Persian poet Hafiz:

I have come into this world to see this: the sword drop from men's hands even at the height of their arc of anger

because we have finally realized there is just one flesh to wound...

I have come into this world to see this:

all creatures hold hands as we pass through this miraculous existence we share on the way to even greater being of soul,

a being of ecstatic light, forever entwined and at play with Him.

I have come into this world to hear this: every song the earth has sung since it was conceived in the Divine's womb and began spinning from His wish...every song the heart should cry with magnificent dignity to know itself as God; for all other knowledge will leave us again in want and aching...

I have come into the world to experience this: men so true to love they would rather die before speaking an unkind word...

I have come into this world to see this: the sword drop from men's hands even at the height of their arc of rage because we have finally realized there is just one flesh we can wound.