

The Value of Values

—Peter Thomas and LifePilot



HIS LIFE MAY HAVE STARTED as an ordinary one. But with infectious enthusiasm and the persistent “can-do” attitude of an entrepreneur firmly grounded by his values, Peter Thomas ensured that it would be anything but ordinary. Mr. Thomas has had something of a remarkable life. He was one of the leading real estate developers and lenders of his time in North America, developing projects worth several billion dollars, including shopping centres, apartments and condominiums, land assembly and golf courses. He brought the franchising rights of Century 21 Real Estate to Canada, founded Samoth Capital Corporation (now known as Sterling Centrecorp Inc.), and developed the

Four Seasons Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Now 70 years of age, Mr. Thomas reflects back to one of the key turning points in his life. He was in his early 30s when, at a Young Presidents’ Organization gathering in Hawaii, he was taught the significance of living a values-based life. “I had a total epiphany!” says Mr. Thomas. “Red Scott was the fellow who taught the class. He took us through an exercise of aligning our daily activities and goals with our values. I realized that hardly anything I did aligned with what I was truly passionate about, what I stood for.” He made the pivotal decision to bring this new way of thinking into his life. “I attribute much of my personal and business success to

this philosophy, which I have refined over the years and decided to share with individuals around the world, from all walks of life, through LifePilot,” his not-for-profit organization.

It was through the work with LifePilot that Mr. Thomas and his team developed connections with various universities in North America, not only to teach the LifePilot process to students but also to foster a dialogue about the importance of values-based living and leadership. This resulted in a partnership with Royal Roads University and their launch of the Todd Thomas Institute for Values-Based Leadership in the summer of 2008.

Being grounded in his values, Mr. Thomas explains, was what ultimately helped him over the loss of his son to suicide in 2000. “Nothing comes close to the loss of a loved one.” He recounts how he once had a partner who declared bankruptcy on national television. “I watched my net worth drop from \$150-million to some minus \$70-million virtually overnight—it took me five years to pay everything back. This was nothing compared to losing Todd.” Throughout these difficult times, Mr. Thomas had to rely on his values and what was really important in his life. “My values were happiness, health, freedom, and integrity. I felt that if I had to give up something, money would be the first I would let go—I could always earn it back. There was nothing I could do to replace Todd.

“I have been fortunate in many ways,” Mr. Thomas asserts. “But to be truly successful, I believe an individual must try to make a positive change in society, day by day, making good values-based decisions. My work now is to help people make the right decisions for themselves. That, in essence, is what LifePilot is all about.”

—Chantal Schauch