

TerrificMentors

The Tree on the other side of the Field



At the age of thirteen I was taught to plough a field by a Polish Exile of War, Dick Sompolenski, who worked his 'captivity' on a farm in England. I had watched him ploughing many times and had walked alongside the heavy Shire horses and the massive two-furrow plough quietly churning the topsoil to create a new bed for the next season's crop seed.

And then, one day, he told me I was going to plough the field. It wasn't a big field, perhaps a couple of acres – two days work for an experienced ploughman if the ground was reasonably dry and the going wasn't too heavy.

I was not confident of my ability to do the job. Just holding the plough steady was hard work. Controlling the horses and guiding the machinery at the same time seemed more daunting from the handles of the plough than it had ever seemed when I was walking alongside, chatting to Dick.

He watched me struggle to maneuver the equipment and order the horses at the same time. After a few yards I was exhausted. Dick stopped me and came over to where I was standing.

"Now," he said kindly, "you've got a wonderful team of horses and one of the best designed bits of farm machinery in the land. Let them do the work for you. You have only one job. Find a tree on the other side of the field. Fix your eye on it. Do not look away to see if the horses or plough are doing the right thing. Trust them, they are. Just keep on looking at that tree until you reach it. Then you will have ploughed a straight furrow and all the rest of the ploughing you do will follow that straight line."

Dick's advice was right. Not just for ploughing a field but for everything I did in life. As long as I kept my eye on *The Tree on the other side of the Field*, I ploughed a straight furrow. Sometimes the tree changed, of course, as life developed. Occasionally I forgot to keep my eye on the tree and got distracted by other matters. But as long as I kept my target in view I worked my way towards it.

I remember Dick's advice every day, and thank him for it.
John Bittleston

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Knowing what you want is not easy. Wealth, health, beauty, success are all generic descriptions of what we mostly see as desirable. They have to be earned. The long-distance runner doesn't succeed unless he is focused and disciplined.

The same is true of a career. About 85% of people can discover what they really want to do. Some 15% cannot. But they can still set up their aim. Once they see *The Tree on the other side of the Field* they will discover that life is about the journey but the journey is only possible if there is a realistic, visible destination.

CAREER AND JOBS is a Personal Mentoring Programme by Terrific Mentors.

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