

Are You Feeling Lucky?

By NATE USELDING
The Bridges Golf Club



I was in a job interview where one of the questions asked was, do you consider yourself lucky? It was a question that really caught me off guard because I didn't prepare for it. What do you say? When I think of being lucky, my initial thoughts are of winning the lottery or a new car. But when I think about it for a second longer, I think of everything else that I'm lucky to have or accomplished like my health, wife, family, house and life in general. Is it all luck, destiny or plain old hard work? Call it what you like, in the end, everything has a way of working itself out. Ten months ago, my life got turned upside down and my wife and I embarked on a new challenge where we needed a little luck.

While I was at the national conference in Atlanta last February, my wife was back home going through grueling interviews for a promotion within her company. She spent the last few months preparing herself for two days of interviews. It was a

good thing I was away, so she could focus and concentrate on the task at hand without any distractions. I received a call from her the night after the interviews with the results and she passed! Holy cow, we are about to embark on a life-changing journey.

What does this mean? With her new position, we would most likely be relocated to an area, which we elected to be anywhere in Minnesota and Wisconsin. We had to be open to relocation because the more you limit yourself, the less likely you will be chosen for a new position. We opened up our relocation to be within driving distance from our families. The next question was, when will this promotion take place and they told her it could take place anywhere from one month to a year and without much notice. Now it was time for the waiting game.

Eric Peterson, my boss for the past four years at Dellwood Hills, and I had a very open relationship, so when I received the

phone call with the good news, Eric was actually in the room with me. I got off the phone and he was equally

excited for my wife and I as I was. Knowing he was going to lose his assistant at anytime, he still put forth the effort to help develop me within this career. I kept him updated throughout the whole process, and we played out several scenarios to prepare us both for what could happen. Of course, the biggest question was how long would I be able to stay with the company after we found out where we would be going. It all depended on how far away we were moving but for sure I would stay through the summer and aerification. Eric has done a lot for me and I wasn't going to leave him in the heat of the season.

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Throughout the next six months of waiting, my wife and I played out multiple scenarios from big to small cities and far away to close to home. One thing was for certain, there was no inclination of where we could go or when and that was hard on us. In one sense, it was exciting with moving, getting a new job and buying a new home and in the other it was scary thinking of what may happen. We had no real answers for anyone, including ourselves, of where the next step would be. We felt like we couldn't plan anything and it was difficult for us knowing our lives can be flipped upside down at any moment. But, we continued to live our lives as if nothing was going to happen. Then, August 15th we got the word we were moving to Winona, Minnesota. Whoa, there were a lot of decisions to make and my wife had to report one week later.

Preparing for the move required me to take care of everything here in the Cities while my wife was in Winona. There are realtors, appraisers, inspectors, movers

and open houses to attend to while looking for a new home in our new city. It was very overwhelming because we were on a timeline; we needed to sell our house as soon as possible in order for me to move to Winona. Looking back, everything went very smoothly and we were very fortunate to sell our house right away to someone who wanted to move in immediately. The whole moving process was stressful on us and going through it alone in our respective places made it much more difficult. Decisions we usually make together had to be made over the phone with a little phone tag.

As we tied up some loose ends to sell and move, I had to start looking for a new job. Winona is a very small market and I was concerned about finding a position in a city with three golf courses. I thought to myself, what if I don't find a job? What else could I do? My first goal was to stay in the field and work hourly till the end of the season. Maybe there would be some assistant positions opening in the off-season to apply for. I had to start networking. I knew a couple of superintendents in the southeastern part of the state but who else could help me? I turned to Eric for some help and advice because he knows more

people than I do and he put me in contact with many more superintendents in the area. This really got the ball rolling and after speaking with them, I had some options to weigh out. I looked at all of them and asked myself, what would the best opportunity be for me? The Bridges Golf Club, formerly known as Winona Country Club, needed help and needed it fast. I set up a formal interview with the Superintendent, Jamie Plomedahl, to talk about my situation. To my luck, the club was going through big changes and with it, they were looking to create an assistant position for the 2007 season. I couldn't believe my ears. Everything worked out for the best and here I am today with a job, within my field, doing what I love.

Now, do I think I am lucky? You bet I do, but it only comes with hard work and determination. I never would be in the position I am in today if I took things for granted and hoped it all landed in my lap. I went out and fought for what I wanted just like I have done my whole life. I may not be lucky enough to win the lottery but right now, my wife and I feel like we already have.

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