



The Tortoise & The Hare

April 2008

Dear Friends,

Once upon a time a tortoise and a hare had an argument about who was faster. They decided to settle the argument with a race. They agreed on a route and started off the race. The hare shot ahead and ran briskly for some time. Then seeing that he was far ahead of the tortoise, he thought he'd sit under a tree for some time and relax before continuing the race. He sat under the tree and soon fell asleep. The tortoise plodding on overtook him and soon finished the race, emerging as the undisputed champ. The hare woke up and realized that he'd lost the race. *The moral- "Slow and steady wins the race. This is the version of the story that we've all grown up with."* **THE STORY DOESN'T END HERE**, there are a few more interesting things.....it continues as follows.....

The hare was disappointed at losing the race and he did some soul-searching. He realized that he'd lost the race only because he had been overconfident, careless and lax. If he had not taken things for granted, there's no way the tortoise could have beaten him. So he challenged the tortoise to another race. The tortoise agreed. This time, the hare went all out and ran without stopping from start to finish. He won by several miles. *The moral - "Fast and consistent will always beat the slow and steady. It's good to be slow and steady; but it's better to be fast and reliable."* **THE STORY DOESN'T END HERE ...**

The tortoise did some thinking this time, and realized that there's no way it can beat the hare in a race the way it was currently formatted. It thought for a while, and then challenged the hare to another race, but on a slightly different route. The hare agreed. They started off. In keeping with his self-made commitment to be consistently fast, the hare took off and ran at top speed until he came to a broad river. The finishing line was a couple of feet on the other side of the river. The hare sat there wondering what to do. In the meantime the tortoise trundled along, got into the river, swam to the opposite bank, continued walking and finished the race. *The moral - "First identify your core competency and then change the playing field to suit your core competency."* **THE STORY STILL HASN'T ENDED ...**

The hare and the tortoise, by this time, had become pretty good friends and they did some thinking together. Both realized that the last race could have been run much better. So they decided to do the last race again, but to run as a team this time. They started off, and this time the hare carried the tortoise till the riverbank. There, the tortoise took over and swam across with the hare on his back. On the opposite bank, the hare again carried the tortoise and they reached the finishing line together. They both felt a greater sense of satisfaction than they'd felt earlier.

The moral - "It's good to be individually brilliant and to have strong core competencies; but unless you're able to work in a team and harness each other's core competencies, you'll always perform below par because there will always be situations at which you'll do poorly and someone else does well."

In life, when faced with failure, sometimes it is appropriate to work harder and put in more effort. Sometimes it is appropriate to change strategy and try something different. And sometimes it is appropriate to do both. The hare and the tortoise also learnt another vital lesson. When we stop competing against a rival and instead start competing against the situation, we perform far better.

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