

Crosby Medal – Forrest W. Breyfogle III

The Crosby Medal is presented to the individual who has authored a distinguished book contributing significantly to the extension of the philosophy and application of the principles, methods, or techniques of quality management.

Acceptance Speech:

I want to express my appreciation to ASQ, the Awards Committee, and Arvind Tripathi, who nominated me for this honor. I am both excited and humbled to receive this recognition.

In 1965 I had my first industry job. This position was between my freshman and sophomore university years. In this job, I manually created Zero Defects charts for McDonald Aircraft in St. Louis, Missouri.

Now, ironically, 40 years later I am receiving an honor named after the man, Phil Crosby, who pioneered the Zero Defects program.

To extend this irony even further, the concept of Zero Defects has more recently led to the creation and development of Six Sigma, which is the topic of the book for which I am receiving this award, *Implementing Six Sigma*.

When we stop to reflect upon our lives, we will all surely see events that were seemingly small at the time but which later proved to have a major impact upon our lives.

I believe that it is not so important that we really know, in real time, when these junctures occur, as long as we understand that if we take actions that are aligned with our true life passions, things will work out in the end.

I would like to share with you five of my life's junctures.

The first juncture that I would like to share was a class that I took in 1975, while working as a Mechanical Engineer within IBM development. In this class, I was introduced to Design of Experiments by an IBM statistician, who was ahead of his time with the application of design matrices. I was very excited about the techniques and immediately benefited from DOE in my job. I continued to learn and apply more statistical and non-statistical techniques in various IBM organizations, later moving into a Product Test Engineer position.

The second juncture was in 1980 when I approached my IBM management, asking them to create a full-time internal statistical consultant role for me. They bought it! For the next 12 years I found my own work. I was given no assignments. I considered my job to be the best in IBM.

During this 12-year period, I had great statistical coaching in IBM. Through this mentoring and studying the principles of experts such as Crosby and Deming, I worked at helping my customers not only answer the question that they asked but helped them develop better approaches for what they really needed, using do-it-smarter techniques.

Also, during these 12 years, my IBM management required me to document formally what I was doing. This led me to writing internal technical reports and creating an internal statistical test guide. This later proved to be the stimulus for my published writings.

During this 1980 time frame, I also saw a need for a book that would help engineers and others ask the right questions and benefit from the wise application of statistical concepts.

This belief led to the third juncture, the writing and publishing of my first book, *Statistical Methods for Testing, Development, and Manufacturing*.

The fourth juncture was taking a bridge to retirement from IBM to begin Smarter Solutions in 1992. Friends thought I was crazy. At this point in time, IBM never had a lay-off. However, I felt a compelling urge to work with and help others outside IBM. This action later led to helping companies with their Six Sigma deployments.

The fifth and final juncture that I would like to share is the writing of *Implementing Six Sigma*, which built upon the concepts of my first book, and the creation of systems within Smarter Solutions to help organizations implement the do-it-smarter techniques described in the book.

All of these five life junctures for me were aligned with my true passion, which is working with and helping others ask and answer the right questions, using do-it-smarter techniques.

In conclusion, I would like also to thank someone who is special to me. Many thanks go to my wife, Becki. She has supported and allowed me the freedom and flexibility to fulfill my passion, which often impacts weekends and holidays. This type of support in life helps create an environment in which casual events can turn into life-changing junctures, positively impacting not only you, but others as well.