

# Turbo Leadership Systems™

## The **TURBO** **Charger**

Phone: (503) 625-1867 • Fax: (503) 625-2699 • email: [admin@turbols.com](mailto:admin@turbols.com)

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To our clients and friends

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### Back to School



Larry W. Dennis, Sr.  
President,  
Turbo Leadership  
Systems©

*Victim or  
victor . . . you  
decide.*

**K**en, a mechanical maintenance engineering technologist for a paper mill in northern Ontario, Canada, told Session 3B of the Leadership Development Lab:

“Back in mid March of 1991, the woodlands department of the old Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company, now Tembec Industries, shut down for two weeks for the first time in a long time. Then, as a result, cutbacks were implemented, which meant that I was out of a job. I had three options: 1) Remain with the same company and become part of a spare employee list, which meant being on call 24 hours a day with no job security (this is not a life); 2) Look for work at another company; 3) Go back to school. I chose to go back to school for something I had always been interested in, mechanical engineering. This was a big decision. Even though I had thought about going back to school and had always thought it would be nice to do this, we had not planned or prepared for this major change in lifestyle.

My wife and I left Kapuskasing for Ottawa so that I could study mechanical engineering for three years at Algonquin College. We had a 6-month old baby and we sold everything we had in order to be able to financially support ourselves for the next three years. Some days there wasn't much food in the refrigerator other than the bare minimum for our baby. During those three years we had a second child. Times were difficult, but I

was going to school! I remained focused on my goal and our hope for a more secure future for us and our family.

In the last semester, while sending out resumes to prospective companies, prior to graduation, I received a positive response from the newly formed company, Spruce Falls Inc. The letter said that if I successfully graduated, I had a job waiting for me back in Kapuskasing with a decent salary and benefits. My stress level went down and my grades went up, putting me back on the dean's list with my grade point average. A short time later, I graduated with grades I could be very proud of.

The lesson I learned from this experience is when I set my mind to accomplishing a goal while taking a calculated risk, I can accomplish anything. The action I call you to take is when a situation requires you to take a risk, do not hesitate to grab the bull by the horns and go along for the ride. The benefit you will gain is you will achieve any goal you set in your mind to accomplish.”

Of course we realize Ken wasn't the only person thrown out of work back in 1991 with the shutdown. We don't know their stories - we can be sure that some of them took the path of “victim” and are still complaining today about “what they did to me”. As it turns out, the shutdown of 1991 was the best thing that ever happened to Ken.

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