



Have you ever found yourself in the awkward position of being the focus of a group conversation...one you never intended to be in from the start??? I did recently. I'd gone skiing with a good friend, and he had been invited to lunch with a number of people that he knew. We arrived, still dressed in ski gear. My friend's friend greeted us at the door of his house and asked if he could take my coat and hat...I was a mess, so my awkwardness is growing by the minute. Everyone there knows each other and I sit down next to our host. Immediately they start asking me questions. Mind you, this is their lunch, but before you know it they are asking me my life history. How I met my wife...How I met the friend I'd skied with...What I do...etc., etc.

Well you know how we used to say there are only six degrees of separation between you and anyone on the planet? Let's just say the planet shrunk recently. They mentioned knowing someone...Turns out I knew that someone well... They asked me about that, and I said, "That's a long story..." Every question seemed to become

A long story ...

And virtually all of these long stories were part of my story...When it came to one of them asking what I do, I gave the Family Business Counsel standard line:

We help family businesses have the conversations they need to have but typically avoid...

[Immediately, two couples kind of roll their eyes and say, "Boy do we need you!" What are the chances??? Our host, who is sitting next to me, when I speak to him instead of the whole group, keeps saying to the couples,](#)

You need to hear this!

Awkward...I didn't set out to "market" on a Sunday afternoon...I was tired, wanting to eat, meet some nice people and try to be a fly on the wall...Then go home and take a nap...No chance...One of the people I did know said near the end, *Well, this became the Mark Wickman show...* OUCH!! THAT is something I don't like hearing...

Fast forward two days and I'm taking a shower. As my hair continues to thin, for some reason, the shower is where a lot of my inspiration and a-ha moments happen.

I realized I'd experienced on Sunday what I'm now calling my

Out-of-Body Experience...

What do I mean by out-of-body experience? Isn't that something like a near-death experience? Normally, yes. But stick with me here. You know how "they say" that right before you die, your whole life FLASHES in front of you? That's what I mean as I, in the shower, was reflecting on Sunday...As people asked their questions of me, it was like my life was being replayed, and, even as I was answering the questions, I felt like I was sort of watching my life...

Everything I've done has prepared me for what I get to do now.

At 61, I continue to discover my purpose. What a gift that is! As uncomfortable as I felt on Sunday I now see Sunday as a gift.