

Jonas's Lessons:

Five Honest Letters From An IT Manager

by Jeremy Wright

Dear reader,

I am, for the moment, assuming that you have somehow stumbled upon these letters after my death. I am quite taken with the idea that I have passed on from this world. In fact, I hope so, since these letters present an embarrassing account of the kind of man I really am.

And again, since I am apparently in the assuming mood, I am assuming that you didn't know me. Because if you did, I'm not sure you would want to admit to that, having read the events I am about to describe.

It's not that I am a particularly evil man, nor is it that I have done anything particularly foolish. In fact, it's quite the opposite. As I sit here in my office, I realize that I haven't necessarily done anything memorable at all. In spite of having been given every opportunity to the contrary.

I sit here writing these letters in the hopes that the lessons I've learned will be spelled out between the lines, as it were, of the story I am about to tell. You will forgive me, dear reader, if at times I seem old, insolent, tattered, or confused. After all, for a man such as myself, few things are more disgusting than to seem to be that which I am.

I don't say all of this to sound pompous, even though that is exactly what I am. No, I say it in an attempt at honesty. Because honesty is why I am writing these letters. It—honesty—is a skill in which I am sorely out of practice. And one which it may take me several pages to perfect.

Having rambled sufficiently, I feel it is time to back up. To go back to the beginning, as it were. Perhaps even to introduce myself? Yes. It is definitely time to introduce myself and the other players on the stage of this performance I will call "Jonas's Lessons."

My name is Jonas Luck. Ironic, really, when I think about it. However, I won't go into why just now, as I have already rambled quite enough for this page. In my life, I have my work and my family. We'll leave my family out of this, as it really has nothing to do with my Lessons. And there I go, being pompous again: capitalizing "lessons." I fear this will continue, dear reader, so please forgive me as I, in spite of myself, am myself.

Getting back to the story: My name is Jonas Luck, and I am in charge of IT at one of the world's largest software development and consulting companies. That isn't to say that I am a particularly important individual in our organization, because I am not. I am simply in charge of IT at our headquarters—which means I make sure that the people who are supposed to make sure that everyone's tools are working are, in fact, doing what they are supposed to be doing. (IT is generally said to stand for Information Technology, but I often refer to it in my head as Ingenious Toodlings.)

I have been with this company for more than twenty years, which makes me one of the oldest men here. It is therefore with some embarrassment that I admit that I am merely in charge of making sure people don't slack off.

One of those people I watch is my "Jonas Thorn," Davis Stewart. He is to me as the Apostle Paul's "thorn in his

side”—he doesn’t go away, and torments me day and night.

That isn’t to say that Davis is evil, or that he literally torments me (though sometimes it does indeed feel that this is his exact intention). Davis is a smart young man, for his age. He was fresh out of college when I hired him. That was a year before all of this began. Meanwhile, he hasn’t lost his zeal for “fresh ideas” and “improving things,” in spite of all of my attempts to introduce him to normal business life.

Davis really does try his best to be an asset to the little team we have here. He sends me weekly e-mails detailing his newest ideas or some of the exciting contacts he has made in the industry. Some of them request that he go to this conference or that, always followed by a “business case” rationalization for the frivolous request. It isn’t, after all, as if he is visiting a client who is preparing to make a million-dollar order. Not that he would, of course, since he is in the IT department at our headquarters, which is just about as far removed from doing client visits as you can get.

Not that that bothers Davis. He is a persistent Thorn, you see. It doesn’t matter how many times I tell him he’s a freethinking lunatic or a fool; he simply smiles at me and tries again a few days later. The boy is full of energy. In fact, maybe that is what grates on me so: his boundless energy. He’s like a puppy. A puppy that can write e-mails, call meetings, write business cases, and generally be good and valuable enough at what he actually does that I can never find cause to rid myself of him.

Now that I have rambled for yet another page, I should probably tell you what the point is of these letters you are holding. I should probably let you in on why I am, I earnestly hope, speaking from the grave.

I sit here on the eve of the second anniversary of Davis’s hiring. It is odd that I mark the passage of time according to events in Davis’s life and not my own. But no matter. On this anniversary of Davis’s entering my life, I cannot help but be reflective. I feel a sense of impending doom, and perhaps it is this sense of doom that actually compels me to write what are, in effect, self-aggrandized tales of what I perceive to be the truth. My hope is that I will continue to document this time in my life and that I will emerge unscathed.

This will, again I am assuming, be a period of time in which I will learn many such Lessons. Lessons I intend to share with you in my own peculiar way. You may need to look for them; in fact, you may have already spotted at least one. My hope is that I will not need to spell them out. If I do, I feel that I will certainly have failed in this most simple of tasks: letting the story tell the truth.

Live well, dear reader,

Jonas Luck

IDEAS DON’T GROW A BUSINESS

Dear reader,

Davis came into my office today, practically breathless. He didn’t knock. Again. You can be sure that I am not one of those bosses who say, “My office has an open door.” Of course, the door does happen to be open. But it’s only open to keep the air fresh—there’s very poor circulation in this part of the building.

I am, in fact, quite taken with the idea that my office door isn’t open at all, and that people should knock before entering. I like to call it common courtesy. A trait Davis seems to lack in every possible way.

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Davis entered my office today with one of his “new ideas” that often make my head hurt. I can feel the pain coming on now just thinking about him wringing his hands, sweating at the brow and generally fidgeting with excitement.

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Now, it's not as though Davis can't control himself. And it's not really as if he's completely wasting my time. He simply has a deep need to share every little thing with me, which, again, isn't common courtesy. Poor lad.

His idea today was something about "increased efficiency" by "leveraging economies of scale." I swear the boy comes up with these phrases just to lose me. I managed to fluff him off by telling him to send me an e-mail detailing his idea. It should give me a few hours of peace while he figures out the best way to try and convince me to listen to him.

The sad thing about Davis is that he tends to be more focused on other people's jobs than his own. You'd think he'd be spending his time dealing with internal customer issues instead of worrying about how best to do something or other that affects the whole company. That is, after all, what they pay me to do.

While I'd never say that Davis was particularly inefficient, it did surprise me when I received an e-mail from him not ten minutes after I sent him away. The bothersome part of the matter is that he hadn't sent me just any e-mail, he had sent me a rather detailed one with quotes and study findings and everything.

I could tell that this would be one of those issues that he wasn't going to drop very quickly. With most of his ideas, I can brush him off a few times until he goes away. But every once in a while he feels he has a particularly worthwhile idea that he actually believes in. Obviously I have a solution for this as well.

When I can't brush him off, the best way to make him stop his pony shucking is to call a meeting. And if I can invite other people of my level to the meeting, I may just be able to show them how important Davis is to the company, without actually showing them anything at all. I do enjoy killing two or three birds with one stone.

I set the meeting for two weeks away, in order to give Davis ample time to calm down before presenting to anyone. There is nothing worse than an uptight Davis doing a presentation. Except, perhaps, for an uptight Davis in my office.

The worst part of the whole plan was that Davis felt a need to e-mail me or come into my office on a daily basis with "status reports" and to "bounce ideas off of me." He does know how to be a bother, I'll give him that much.

After several of these, I asked him, quite pointedly in fact, if he thought he could actually do this presentation or if he'd require me to do it. Why, dear reader, you should have seen the look on his face! Pure horror it was, almost as if I'd said his idea, whatever it was, didn't have any merit. Which it doesn't.

The problem with Davis is that he doesn't realize that ideas simply don't help a business grow. A focus on doing your part of the work will do far more for any company than thinking up new ways to "innovate" and "engage."

Poor lad, I'm hoping that this time I can teach him that lesson.

Suffice it to say that the day of the presentation came and Davis did well enough—at least, when compared to his past performances. There were PowerPoint slides and animations and quotes from the Gartner Group. If I hadn't had an overly large breakfast that morning, I might have been impressed. In fact, it was going so well I thought I might have to ask a pointed question that would strip Davis of all that confidence.

Thankfully, the accounting manager beat me to it when he asked Davis if this would "actually make us any money." Davis almost missed a beat when he responded that it would save "soft dollars" by "increasing efficiency."

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I could tell that Dayne, the accounting manager, wasn't listening when his eyes glazed over completely.

I felt it was time to ask the all-important question of cost. Davis pulled up a chart that detailed how, even though his plan would cost some amount of money, the company would make it back in six months. I asked him if that was a personal guarantee, which made him visibly flinch.

Davis's problem is largely that he doesn't understand what he doesn't understand. I have no desire, nor does anyone at the company, to spend money to potentially save money. Granted, some of his past ideas have saved us money—I've allowed them because they didn't cost us anything. However, when he starts talking about "efficiencies," I can always tell he hasn't realized that a potential savings is never as good as a real one. It's completely unrealistic for him to expect Dayne, our accounting manager, to give him money simply to do whatever he feels like doing so that his idea might, one day, if everything goes well, save the company only a little bit more than the project actually ended up costing.

I had thought the meeting had served its purpose, until Davis sent me a post-meeting e-mail asking me what I thought.

I always hate open-ended questions because they require a response. Responses require me to reflect on what was said, which is difficult when I wasn't really listening. Meetings are rarely about actually communicating anything, at least in the presentations. The valuable part of attending meetings is often what people say after the meeting—only then will you get to find out what's really happening in the company.

I get the feeling that "what's really happening" is something Davis is missing. My response to him attempted to drive that home by relying on phrases like "low-hanging fruit," which I'm sure he'll enjoy. It may even raise his respect and awe of me, and that's never a bad thing.

In my experience, e-mail is where conversations go to die and meetings are where ideas go to die. My hope is that this little idea of his will simply go away.

Live well, dear reader,

Jonas Luck

SOME THINGS DON'T GO AS PLANNED

Dear reader,

I honestly believe that in a past life I must have been a dolphin. Swimming, splashing, and playing all day somehow seems to agree with some deep part of who I am. Maybe it's that there are no consequences in a dolphin world; or maybe it's that the ocean is so big that, if something goes awry, you can always find another part of the ocean to swim, splash, or play in.

Alas, in this life I am not a dolphin—not even close. I haven't been swimming in years, I would look completely undignified doing so, and the last time I played was when my children were toddlers. No, in this life I am not a dolphin. In spite of having a day in which I wished that I could simply find another corner of the ocean to frolic in.

For you see, dear reader, today was not an ordinary day, in any sense of the word "ordinary." In fact, today was one of the worst days I've ever heard of. It started, as always, with seeing Davis. Thankfully he didn't say anything, but his mere presence was nearly enough to sour my thoughts of getting any quality work done. Maybe it was the way he was working, or maybe it was even the fact that he was working so diligently. I could just tell that yesterday's delaying tactics hadn't changed his resolve at all.

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As I walked past my secretary, she informed me that there was an “emergency strategic meeting.” Though I’m not entirely sure what that means, hearing “emergency” and “strategic” in the same sentence is nearly as daunting as hearing “emergency” and “meeting” in the same sentence. Believe you me, dear reader, hearing all three words jumbled together in such a haphazard fashion did nothing to improve my mood.

Thankfully, the meeting had already started, so I was saved from any initial opening salvo of issues. Hopefully everyone involved had settled in, started drinking their coffee, and started tuning out.

I made my way to the meeting after picking up my “executive briefcase” and was surprised to find that the room was packed. There must have been thirty people inside, and not one of them was a low-ranking assistant. There were, quite literally, people from all across the company and around the world at this little meeting.

I found it interesting that I only heard about the meeting this morning, when obviously others must have heard about it days before. No matter, I thought to myself, as I found a chair at the back of the room and settled in for what might just be an entertaining show.

Before I heard what the presenter was saying, I noticed that it was the Chief Financial Officer (I’ll refer to him as the CFO from now on) who was up there. This was the first time I’d seen Teddy in more than five years, as he was always off traveling and “making the deal” or some such nonsense. I always found it odd that one of the most important people in the company spent no more than ten days a year at the company headquarters.

I finally tuned in to the fact that Teddy was talking, and in a rather grave manner at that. He was saying something about “focus on the bottom line” and “inefficiencies across the company” and “drastic measures.” I do believe that is when my ears perked up. “Drastic measures” is almost as dire as “emergency strategic meeting.” Thankfully, I thought, there were no “immediate drastic measures.”

Sadly, dear reader, the next words out of Teddy’s mouth were “truly immediate drastic measures.” My day was ruined. There wasn’t a thing to be done about it. I coughed softly enough for a few heads to turn, which caused Teddy to pause and look directly at me.

I asked him what all of this actually meant. He seemed taken aback by my directness. I assure you, dear reader, that he was no more taken aback than I was when he said “truly immediate drastic measures.” The man deserved a taste of his own medicine, I tell you!

I will save you the details of the rest of the four-hour meeting, because there are far too many painful moments to recall. The long and short of the “truly immediate drastic measures” was that every department needed to account for every staff member, every project, and every dollar spent over the last five years. It seems that the company was on the verge of collapse—hence these “drastic measures.”

One would think an internal audit would have sufficed; something I am quite skilled at, I might add. Apparently, an internal audit wasn’t what was in the cards. What was in the cards were the heads of every senior manager across the company. Any departments that didn’t fall into line, and any manager which could not make a proper accounting of himself, would immediately (and, I imagine, “truly”) be axed.

It was, I can tell you, rather unnerving to see thirty of my colleagues all adjusting their neckties as if to ensure their craniums were still attached.

Thankfully, I had consumed and enjoyed the good breakfast my wife served this

morning, so I had my wits about me. I noted to Teddy that my department had several innovative new ideas that we felt could make a significant difference, if given a chance. Teddy nearly jumped over the table at me, and, I'm sure, nearly planted a "true and immediate" kiss on my left cheek. After the meeting, he asked me for details and I told him, without really thinking, about Davis and his many thoughts to save the company. Teddy told me I could have whatever resources I required, within reason.

I assume he means within my reason, not within Davis's, as I know that Davis would happily eat up every dollar in the company to fulfill his flights of fancy.

I, however, must get used to this. I have effectively pinned, in my foolish zeal to save my own neck, the entire department on Davis and his "ingenuity." A large part of me can't wait to tell him that I will be green-lighting some of his projects. I will need to be careful, you see, that Davis doesn't get bigheaded, and that none of the credit goes directly to him.

My hope, dear reader, is that I can distract Teddy for long enough to ensure that "OK" is good enough. I would, after all, hate to do some of these "innovative" ideas only to have them fail and have us be in a worse condition than if I'd simply kept my mouth shut.

But I assure you that I will not let us fail. My years of experience and my ability to calm a situation will surely come in handy over the next few months as I endeavor to save not only my department but, more important, my parking space.

Live well, dear reader,

Jonas Luck

LOOKING AHEAD THROUGH A REARVIEW MIRROR

Dear reader,

As I am sure you are aware, there are times when life crawls along slower than a snail going uphill in January in Alaska, and there are times where you feel more like a long-lost Andreotti brother than a normal human being. I can tell you honestly, dear reader, that until recently I had felt entirely like that poor frozen snail.

After my last letter to you, many things changed around here. And they changed in such a way that I was propelled to learn to go faster and further than I had done in many, many years.

In fact, the last few months have been a completely new experience for me in many ways. Several of my peers were released from their duties, several departments were merged, and the overall mood of the entire company changed nearly overnight. Everywhere, that is, except for my little corner of the world.

That isn't to say that things are going incredibly well here, but somehow we've been safe from what is happening outside; principally because of how busy we have been. I have given Davis more free rein than I'd ever imagined possible, and it has certainly been entertaining to watch.

He immediately went about renegotiating with our computer and network suppliers, and worked out a leasing deal that saved us millions of dollars on paper. Sadly, several users lost files and such when the new machines came in, and we ended up having to purchase an extended support agreement that nearly wiped out any savings. However, the move looked very, very good to Teddy, our CFO. It's almost as if seeing us do something was more important than having us account for doing nearly nothing over the last several years.

Now, I can't say I approve of all of Davis's ideas. No, many of them are still entirely foolish. Just last week he proposed installing a wireless network, which he claimed would save lots of "soft dollars" because people would be able to get laptops and work from anywhere, including meetings. The thought of having people on the lawn out front working was appealing, but I knew that this was just another one of his old schemes. I'd heard it before, and I wasn't being sucked in purely on account of his zeal.

Then there was the new storage solution Davis brought in. The project went over budget, didn't meet our expectations, and is generally no better than our previous solution. Teddy didn't seem to mind, but I nearly fired Davis for not thinking the whole thing through.

All in all, dear reader, it has been an exciting time. I have managed to earn an increasing amount of kudos and, with it, a parking spot right in front of the building—though I suspect this could be because half of the senior managers have been quietly let go. No matter. There are perks to every dark cloud, and the ability to park my car within walking distance of my office is certainly one I am not going to pass up. Nor let go of easily.

Sadly, on the organizational front, the changes that were made didn't make much of a difference. There were lots of meetings, and even more e-mail, about how things needed to change. I would have pointed out my philosophy on meetings and e-mails to Teddy but that would have required, ironically, either a meeting or an e-mail to explain.

Yes, it has been an exciting time. But excitement also carries its challenges. Davis is obviously bolder than he's ever been before. I think he honestly believes it has become his duty to come up with ideas. I fear that I haven't been tempering his expectations nearly enough. It could be because I've begun actually answering his e-mail, inviting him to other meetings, and so forth. He may have become something of an icon in the company, which is a bit odd considering how little of the credit has gone directly to him.

For instance, yesterday he came in and invited me to a meeting that he was calling with other "key people in the organization." I was taken aback; not only by the fact that he had started calling meetings but also by the reality that none of the people in the room were actually all that important to the company. None even supervised a single individual.

It seemed to me as if the entire meeting was all about generating new ideas. There was even a certain level of animosity in the air toward me, which was odd as I barely even knew these people. My suspicion is that this was actually Davis calling a meeting purely to show me how much power he had, and that he was able to sway people's opinions. I was able to change that rather quickly though.

You see, dear reader, while the last few months have been rather new and rather exciting, I haven't forgotten my all-important ability to stall a meeting or conversation completely. All it really took were a few "how will this affect the bottom line?" questions and a few rolls of the eyes when I was told by each individual that this was a "soft dollar" savings that "increased efficiency" for me to realize that Davis had simply found a group of like-minded digital hippies.

They obviously didn't understand the trouble the company was in, or they wouldn't be worried about these "soft dollars." What we needed was to save real money, not this soft stuff. The company needed a leader capable of keeping free thinkers like this under control. Obviously this wasn't the first time these hippies had met; and, equally obviously, they had been left to their own devices for far too long.

I immediately realized that I'd been let into the inner sanctum of a group that consid-

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ered themselves noble, intelligent, and important. While I could easily shut the group down by letting their managers know that they were doing activities other than their duties on company time, I thought it might be useful to play along. And let me tell you, dear reader, that I was a master actor in playing along.

I started to listen to their ideas, I asked for detailed reports and other kinds of minor activities designed to keep them spinning their wheels. I had, in one fell swoop, assembled a “task force” that would quickly propel me to even greater heights. They even came up with a little name for themselves, once they realized that I was “behind” them: Task Force 42. I’m not sure why they wouldn’t be “Jonas’s Task Force.” But no matter.

Now not only was my department busy but I had just acquired even more staff from other departments that I could keep busy as well. If Teddy didn’t think I was indispensable before, he would find out very quickly just how hard to replace I could be.

My intent isn’t to run these poor kids into the ground but to ensure that they are kept busy with reports, surveys, meetings with vendors, and weekly Task Force 42 status reports, which I, ironically, have e-mailed to me. Some weeks I even read them.

Yes, my last letter detailed one of the worst days of my life; but this is certainly turning out to be a bumper year. More power, more authority, a larger team, and a better parking spot. Yes, dear reader, I have surely arrived.

Live well, dear reader,

Jonas Luck

THE FUTURE CAN BE SHOCKING

Dear reader,

They say that in the heat of passion you lose all perception of time, what people think of you, and where things are going. In the last few months I have experienced just that: a complete lack of perception.

Things were going well on the various projects Davis was doing. Looking back, many of them actually made perfect sense: this is, perhaps, the problem. We consolidated servers, re-tendered all of our maintenance deals, reevaluated many of our fixed-cost services (such as Web connectivity), and released several new tools to our user base to help them be more effective.

I believe that the organization is better for it. I can’t say we necessarily saved any money, though. Which was supposed to be the point. But, then, looking back on my earlier letters I realize that I was never looking to save money; so, I guess in that aspect, I have succeeded brilliantly.

I suppose I should tell you before we go any further that I am no longer with my employer. I was offered a generous early departure package and decided to take it. Part of the reason I accepted is that it was a nice package and, even though I live to work, I wouldn’t mind a holiday. The real reason, though, is that Davis had become the de facto manager anyway. He was calling meetings, thinking up ideas, and basically calling all the shots. It was my job to simply say no when his ideas were foolish enough. And, I must admit, that was happening less and less frequently in recent months.

It seems that I may have overstepped my bounds. I may have worked myself out of a job, which isn’t a feeling I am used to.

My gut tells me that now is the time to look back and see what I have learned. While this wasn’t the original point of these letters, it seems to be a salient enough one, given what’s recently happened.

I suppose I should tell you before we go any further that I am no longer with my employer.

I can't promise, dear reader, that I will be as objective an observer as I have previously been. I am, after all, still in a fair amount of shock as a result of not having to go to work every morning. I do still get up at 4 A.M., shower and get dressed, shave, and organize my briefcase. Some mornings, I nearly get out to the car before I realize that I could have simply slept in.

Perhaps it is the ultimate irony that, now that I am able to sleep in, I have no desire to do so. Which is why I sit here now, writing this letter. I have been awake for four hours, and the rest of the house is still as quiet as can be. I am left to my thoughts more than is comfortable these days, and many of the thoughts are foreign to me.

I wonder, for instance, if Davis really has the potential to run my department. I wonder how he'd fare at higher-level meetings where his ideas would be shot down and the games of power would play out—while he, most likely, remained completely oblivious to them. I wonder if maybe he can change that, just as he somehow managed to change my department, and even, in some way, me.

In my wonderings, there comes an unbidden thought: if Davis had this potential all along, why did I get in his way?

You must understand, dear reader, that this is not how I typically think. Even questioning this thought isn't how I typically think. Which leads me to believe that something has quite obviously changed. Something profound.

As I look back over the last few years of change in the organization, I can't help but wonder if I could have done more good. I've never really strived to do "good" before; at least, not at work. After all, companies are in it for themselves, so why shouldn't their employees be in it for themselves as well?

And, as I look back, several things are clear to me. Others are hazy and indistinct, but they seem to be just as important as the ideas that are clear, if not more so.

I realize now, quite clearly, that conversation is more important than power. I realize that I could have sat down and actually talked to Davis about what kind of man he was anytime during the last several years. Perhaps it was merely a product of Davis being in the kind of environment he was in.

The fact that I took advantage of the faults of human nature by encouraging Davis to communicate via e-mail, where I am still convinced information goes to die, is perhaps evidence of my inability to actually be human in front of anyone at work.

Perhaps these letters will be the only fragment of humanity to ever make its way into the visible world. Perhaps you, dear reader, will be the only person ever to know this side of me.

I regret now that I lived a life of mediocrity. I regret that I only did things well enough to not get personal glory, and that I never encouraged Davis to shine. Regret is such a new thing to me, though. I also envy Davis for having the time to make a difference. I am gone now, but he may well be there for years to come—making a difference every day he stays.

It seems that so much of what happened at the organization was a waste of time, a waste of resources, and a waste of thought. I know it wasn't just me that tried to slow things down, as many of us often laughed about the things the "young pups" were trying to do. I know now that those young pups were the inevitable result of our lack of ability to actually *do* anything. While we loved to stall, they loved to do.

My fear now is that I will be condemned to a desire to *do*, to make a difference, in spite of having no outlet in which to *do* at all. Sure, I could garden, or take up golf. But somehow that seems just as worthwhile as using e-mail and meetings to stop com-

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munication, or starting projects simply to try and save money (or my job).

I suppose I shouldn't complain. I was never one to believe in karma, dear reader, but it seems it doesn't matter. It seems karma believes in me. As I said before, these days I have a lot of time to devote to thought. I can't promise anything worthwhile will come out of that time. But, perhaps, these letters will prove that I wasn't completely idle, nor was I completely useless, in the years after I learned to live.

Live well, dear reader,

Jonas Luck

YEARS LATER

Davis quietly put down the letters and leaned back. The labor of the process weighed heavily on his mind. He had read, and reread, these letters until the words were burned into his mind.

At first, he didn't know why Jonas's widow insisted that he accept the packet of letters. He wasn't even aware Jonas had died until she called. He had never met Mrs. Luck. And, when he did, it was only for the briefest of moments as she handed the letters to him. She told him she didn't feel it right to keep them, since they were obviously intended for him.

As Davis read through the first letters, he lacked any comprehension as to why the letters would be for him. He remembered the bitterness he'd felt toward Jonas. He remembered Jonas's inability to see past his desk, and his lack of desire to effect change in the organization.

But he also remembered that it was thanks to Jonas that he was the man he was today.

It had been many years since Jonas had left the company. Not so many that Davis forgot him, but enough that the old ways of doing things had largely been left behind. Davis often asked himself how Jonas would feel about the new company, with its forward-thinking, customer-centric focus. He wondered if Jonas would appreciate that Davis gave each of his employees the time and place they needed to voice new ideas.

He was sure that Jonas would merely lean back, arch his fingers together, and smile in that absurdly knowing way that meant he wasn't even listening to you. Davis had gotten to know that look many times. He had even appropriated it. He called it his "poker face."

After all, every CEO needs to hide his true feelings sometimes, even Davis Stewart.

FROM THE EDITOR

If you spend any time reading blogs, it is hard to miss Jeremy. Things got exciting last year when he auctioned his own skills in blog consulting on eBay. His auction was the most viewed one of the month and it got picked up by the CBS Marketwatch website. A month later, he was fired from his day job for blogging about that company's equipment and the lack of work being assigned to him. He now does all sorts of writing including an upcoming book of his own called *Blog Marketing* (due to be released at the end of 2005). He also runs insideblogging.com, a consulting company that helps businesses establish blogs. And he does all this within view of the Bay of Fundy (New Brunswick, Canada).

But he also remembered that it was thanks to Jonas that he was the man he was today.

Jeremy's blog:

www.ensight.org

Jeremy's favorite blogs:

www.problogger.net

www.darrenbarefoot.com

www.joystiq.com

Recommended reading:

www.slackermanager.com

In His Own Words . . .

What is it about your essay topic that made you want to write this chapter in *More Space*?

“Having been in information technology, business, and management for ten years, I know most of us have many habits that if we could only break them would make us much more effective at our jobs. Originally I’d written this as “Five Things to Fix in IT,” but it seemed so dry. Instead, I’ve illustrated these five things with a narrative—one where we can see ourselves in all the characters and their flaws. While it may not be as to-the-point as my original plan, my hope is that it will stick in readers’ heads much more than it would have otherwise.”