



Giants, Gravity, Bridges, Understanding and Sir Isaac Newton

by Debra Scifo, ASAC Executive Director

Here we are Spring 2016, a time of year when all things are new and we are looking forward to the possibilities. This time of year takes on familiarity and has an aura of déjà vu, been there done that sort of feeling. Actually not a new concept, did you ever see the movie Ground Hog Day? Because the day was repeated over and over, the weatherman became increasingly aware of the events and responded differently because of what he had learned in the preceding days.

An advantage of experience is the ability to see farther into the future, only life experience can deliver such foresight. Or, does it? Is there another way that we can see further than others? Sir Isaac Newton believed that it was possible to see further than others and he expresses this thought, "If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants." Who are your mentors?

Sir Isaac Newton was a thinker and the most influential scientist of his time or for that matter still today and was a key player in the scientific revolution. A scientist by education and interest, Sir Isaac Newton also stands as a great philosopher. He contributed so much, optics, calculus, laws of motion; he built the first practical reflecting telescope and developed the theory of color based on observation of the prism. I have just scratched the surface, this guy was amazing. He was aware of the world around him and was continually wondering, thinking and asking why. All of this, for most of us is new information. What he really did was discover gravity!

As the story goes, he was sitting under the apple tree and an apple fell from the tree. From this common occurrence he asked, "what made the apple fall?" The conclusion, it fell because of gravitation. Gravitation gives things weight and keeps everything in its place. This knowledge gives new meaning to the concept of being grounded. Are you grounded?

As you set goals for 2016 who are the people that you plan to engage. Are they old acquaintances and colleagues or are they new found friends or people to be discovered? Because we know that success is found through partnerships and partnerships are based on relationships our goals or should I say to achieve our goals we must build bridges. Sir Isaac Newton noted that "to every action there is always an equal and opposite or contrary, reaction". He also understood that, "men build too many walls and not enough bridges." In the building of bridges we encounter so many different kinds of people in just as many varied situations. This is how perspective is born and gives rise to opinions. There are valid opinions, ones that are credible and others that we just cannot get our head around. To be productive and build bridges we must hone our communication skills and learn the art of being tactful. A great scientist, Sir Isaac Newton, noted that, "Tact is the knack of making a point without making an enemy." How many bridges must you build to reach your 2016 goals?

The goals you pursue in 2016 matter most to you, after all they are your goals. But because we depend on others, our partners, to help us reach our goals they must understand what we are up to and why. To have others understand our goals is our responsibility and probably our greatest challenge. After all if we can get others as excited about our goals as we are that is the secret to success. Sir Isaac Newton gives us insight on this matter. Because I've quoted him far too much, let me summarize. He says that simple is best and that simplicity can be found in truth, and we can only understand what is true. Read that again, simple is best, simplicity can be found in truth, and we can only understand what is true. What are your 2016 goals?

In closing 2015 and opening 2016 it is my hope that with all you have learned and know today you have discovered how much more there is yet for you to learn. Newton chimes in with, "What we know is a drop, what we don't know is an ocean."

My wish for you is a happy and prosperous New Year filled with giants, gravity, bridges and understanding or friends, purpose, community and compassion. I look forward to seeing you in 2016.