

Ron, here it is in your book format so you can **cut and paste it directly**.

****Title: Different Dogs, Different Missions****

I was thinking about this one day while taking a four-mile walk through the woods. Not a march, just a quiet forest walk. Sometimes when you walk like that, your mind has room to think.

A scene from the movie *Saving Private Ryan* came to mind.

Tom Hanks and his men have just come off a brutal mission. They lost men taking out German artillery. They're exhausted, dirty, worn down. For a moment they are sitting behind the lines drinking coffee and eating sandwiches.

The colonel hangs up the phone and tells them there is another mission. It is coming from the top. It is important.

You can see something change in Tom Hanks' face.

He is tired. He has lost men. But when he hears the word ****mission****, something inside him wakes right back up.

It reminded me of a Labrador retriever sitting on the edge of a lake. The owner is holding a ball. The lab is locked in position, every muscle tight, waiting for the throw.

The second that ball hits the water, the lab explodes forward. Splash. Swim. Retrieve.

You can throw that ball all day long and that dog will never get tired of it. That is what he was made to do.

A German Shepherd is different. He may sit quietly on the front porch while the children play in the yard. He does not look like he is doing much, but he is always watching. Deep in his instincts he knows his job is protection. He stands guard over the house, the yard, and the children.

A hound dog is different again. He will spend the entire day with his nose to the ground following a scent. Tracking the trail is what brings him alive.

Then there are the little yappy dogs that sit on someone's lap. Their job is comfort and companionship. They bring warmth and joy to the person holding them.

Poodles have their place as well. They are groomed and polished, walking proudly and looking sharp.

Each one of those dogs can love. Each one can be loyal. But each one has a different purpose and a different nature.

Human beings are much the same way, but there is an important difference between dogs and people.

Dogs are largely born with their instincts already in place. A retriever retrieves. A shepherd guards. A hound follows a scent.

Human beings are more complicated.

Some parts of our personality are God-given. Some come from our parents and how we were raised. Some come from the experiences we live through.

Teachers influence us. Friends influence us. Siblings influence us. Hard events shape us. The Marine Corps shaped a large part of who I became. So did my father, Gladys, schoolteachers, and many others along the way.

Make no mistake about it—personalities are developed.

After a certain age, those experiences become part of who we are. They become the way we function in the world. In many ways they become part of our personal DNA.

But even when a person naturally leans one direction in personality, the other parts of life are still there.

A mission-driven person can still love deeply.
A protector can still show compassion.
A quiet thinker can still laugh with joy.

Grace, mercy, kindness, and happiness remain part of us.

In relationships the goal should not be to change someone's personality. The goal is to understand it and learn how to live beside it.

In a pack of dogs there are alpha males and alpha females. They establish their place in the order of the pack. Lions, wolves, and dogs all learn their position. They adjust and learn how to function together.

Human relationships are not much different.

Personalities will always exist.

The wisdom is not in trying to change the personality.

The wisdom is in building bridges between them.

****Nuggets of Wisdom****

People are not meant to be identical. Personalities are shaped by God, family, and the experiences of life.

Conflict often comes from expecting someone to think and act exactly the way we do.

Strong relationships are built when we stop trying to change each other and instead learn to understand, respect, and bridge our differences.

****Proverbs****

"He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." Proverbs 14:29

"As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Proverbs 27:19

"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14

Ron, one quick observation before you rest tonight.

This story fits ****perfectly**** with the idea you developed earlier about ****people having different operating systems****. It explains that concept in a simple way anyone can picture. That makes it one of the more powerful teaching stories in your book.