


5-24-1991

Interview with Charles Juran

Dr. Joseph M. Juran Collection

Follow this and additional works at: <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/juran-transcripts>

 Part of the [Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons](#), [Management Sciences and Quantitative Methods Commons](#), [Operations and Supply Chain Management Commons](#), [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#), and the [Strategic Management Policy Commons](#)

NSUWorks Citation

Dr. Joseph M. Juran Collection, "Interview with Charles Juran" (1991). *'An Immigrant's Gift': Interviews about the Life and Impact of Dr. Joseph M. Juran*. Paper 34.
<http://nsuworks.nova.edu/juran-transcripts/34>

This Transcript is brought to you for free and open access by the NSU Digital Collections at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in 'An Immigrant's Gift': Interviews about the Life and Impact of Dr. Joseph M. Juran by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

Charles E. Juran

(Interviewed on 24 May 1991, Palos Verdes, California)

Video Roll #22

Q: Chuck when we, we put the tape together, just one little question, do you want to be Chuck, Charles? How should we....

CHUCK JURAN: Most people call me Chuck.

Q: Okay if I do that, too?

CHUCK JURAN: Sure.

Q: It's Chuck Juran. I'm afraid, I still don't have it straight. How, what, the sequence of, of, of each of you and your, and your sister? The first was....

CHUCK JURAN: Bob was the oldest.

Q: Bob was the oldest.

CHUCK JURAN: I think he was born in 1928. And my sister is a, I think two years younger than him.

Q: Twenty-six.

CHUCK JURAN: No, it'd be thirty.

Q: Oh right, I went the wrong way.

CHUCK JURAN: Yeah. [LAUGHS] Yeah. Yeah, and I was born in '31. And then Donny is '41, ten years later.

Q: That must have been some surprise to all of you.

CHUCK JURAN: I'm not sure the....[LAUGHS]...well, went into that....I remember the, of course the war was on then and we were talking about how we ought to take in a refugee. A lot of people were taking in refugees from Europe. And my dad had a, at dinner he said, well you've talked about that and we've decided not to have a refugee but we will have another member of the family instead. And that was how we heard about Donny. [LAUGHS] So I don't know if that was in lieu of a refugee or it just occurred that way.

Q: In retrospect maybe, are you glad it wasn't a refugee or....

CHUCK JURAN: Oh, I had a wonderful time with my little brother. The, we're ten years apart and during the war we spent a lot of time together. He was just a little guy but we always had a good time together.

Q: Now I, I'm sure that you knew that, you know, coming over here you, we're trying to do some documentary about your father. Probably some thoughts came through your mind. What, you know, what comes to, what bubbled to the top first that you really think ought to be on this?

CHUCK JURAN: Oh gosh the, you know, to me his, his life is the American dream. It's a, it's what this country is supposed to be. You start with nothing and the opportunity is there and it's what you make of it. It's strictly on talent. He didn't, there's a lot of different ways people can succeed. You can be born into the right family or people can give you a helping hand along the way and, or there can be some luck involved. But in his case there wasn't any of those things. It was just, he did it all himself. And it's just amazing to me that not just him but so many people who came out of that little shack in Minneapolis that did it that way.

Q: It, I mean I, I didn't come out of that kind of a background myself but it just seemed that the almost crippling level of poverty on the one hand, but when I hear Nat talk about it and hear your father talk about the ideals, the ethics, the morality that were imbued in that household....

CHUCK JURAN: Yeah, the way he describes his father, I'm not sure how much of that was drummed into him and how much other is just natural. He's, he's the most ethical person I've ever met in my life. And he would never not even, not cross the line but not even have a hint of getting near the line. If there's a, a way to...chisel a little on your income tax or something of that sort he, he would have none of that. [Not even a whisper of it.] And I think that's just the way he is. I don't think it had anything to do with his training.

Q: It, its been interesting speaking with a lot of his colleagues, who know him professionally and who've, it's probably fair to say who almost revere him professionally.

But I would guess that growing up in a household is different. I mean the sex talk with Dr. Juran...[LAUGHTER]....when you're 11, 12, how about those, that side of your father?

CHUCK JURAN: Well I've, I think I was a little more fortunate than the others because I kind of went into the scene, I went into technology. I'm a mechanical engineer and he was an electrical engineer. And we had kind of a rapport and on, on those lines that the others didn't have. so it was fortunate for me that we had a good relationship. And....and a, the timing was such that the war interrupted some of that. He was terribly busy during the war. And the, the family relationship suffered during those years. But...I, I don't feel like I had an unusual upbringing or anything like that. We moved a lot. I didn't care for that.

Q: How about if we go a little piece at a time? I mean was there the, the famous father-son birds and the bees talk in your house?

CHUCK JURAN: I'm not sure I remember anything like that. I suppose there was at one time or another. But I, I don't recall specifically. We did the normal things. We had the Cub Scouts and games we played and things like that.

Q: We've heard all about Joe Juran, you know, the boy who grew up in poverty. Joe Juran who pulled himself through college. The chess player. The, the ping pong player. The, the quality expert. The man who founded a, an institute, if you will. Tell me about Joe Juran the father.

CHUCK JURAN: Well, we were not a real social family. I, I think people still re, regard us that way today. We, I don't recall us entertaining people in the home or, or that sort of thing. We played a lot of games. I, I can remember ping pong was something we always had in the house. And...the, we listened to the radio. That seems silly today but every Sunday night we'd make cinnamon toast and drink cocoa and listen to Jack Benny and Fred Allen and the programs that were on Sunday night. And that was a, that was a big part of our entertainment. We didn't do much in the way of going out for entertainment. And of course, we, the family was not particularly affluent. My dad had a good job but in those days people didn't make a lot of money.

I remember we used to write in, there was a program called Information Please. And they had a panel of experts and they would ask some questions on the radio. And if you sent in a question that was used they would send you an Encyclopedia Britannica. And my dad wanted an encyclopedia in the worst way. And here he was a fairly high level guy in the Bell System and he couldn't afford an encyclopedia. And so we would write in questions all, never won a Britannica but we wrote in questions all the time to try to win one. He always wanted power tools. Never had the money for that. So it, it was not an affluent life by any means, although we were never in -- anybody who didn't lose their job in the depression was miles ahead of the rest of them. So we'd, we weren't hurting. But the things that my kids take for granted we never had.

Q: [DIRECTIONS]...and we start sweating immediately. And we would just immediately put hands on some tissue and say we're going to call that Chuck's tissue. And everyone

once in a while we'll say please use Chuck's tissue.

[LAUGHTER] Somebody talked about, you know, you when you think about your father, the, you know, the, the fond memory moments. You know, those little sort of snapshots, the flashback in the movie. You know, that little moment that said, that sort of defined your father for you, tell me about some of those little....that say this is my father.

CHUCK JURAN: Oh gosh....well....I'm, a lot of that is, is fairly recent stuff. I think we've, even though I live way out here I make it a point to go back twice a year now. And of course when the kids were growing up he came out here quite a bit. I remember one time going into his study and he was revising a book or some darn thing and, but on the corner of the desk there's a little graph and he was keeping track of how many hits Pete Rose got and when he was going to catch Ty Cobb. And it...it, to me that is a, sort of symbol of the, the breadth of knowledge he has. It's, it's just incredible. I, I've never met anyone who knows so much about so many different things. And he can converse on any subject -- any subject. It, it's, it doesn't matter what you bring up and, and he knows the, he knows the facts that are involved in it.

Q: What about a moment? Take me to a moment in your life that you shared with, with your father that was important to you.

CHUCK JURAN: One of the best experiences I've had with him was in the, it would have been in the '50s. I was in the Air Force and I was stationed down in central Illinois. And he was in Chicago for a trip of some sort. So I, I drove

up and we got in the, I guess we took my car. And we drove around and visited all the places where he had lived in those days. And there were a number of them in Chicago. Before he got married and his first apartment which was over a drugstore and had the dentist's name painted on, their living room window had the name of a dentist on it. It was his advertisement. And, and some of his landlords were still there. Of course, that would have only been twenty years later, I guess. There was a guy named DiGiovani, and he was the old school Italian and he was crossing himself and everything when my dad walked in to meet him after all these years.

And we visited all those places and...I asked him if he didn't feel pretty good about coming back in his, the circumstances he was in now and, coming back later and, and revisiting the, the scenes of what, what had happened before. And he said it reminded him of a line [from] Kipling, the poem, If. There's a line if you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same....and he didn't feel like he was coming back in triumph. That he, he realized that he was fortunate to be in those circumstances. But he wasn't exultant about it.

And....another thing I remember, and this wasn't a pers, this wasn't face-to-face, but I'd won some sort of office or something in college and he, he wrote me about it and he said that, that if he had been, if that had happened to him at my age he would have felt like he had won some savage victory over his enemies. He, he was, he was at that age kind of bitter about the circumstances that he had been in and the tough time he'd had just, just scraping by trying to get through college and come up with that, I think it was \$37 every six months. And he was bitter about it. He, he'd led a

tough life and he put all that behind him. He, he's critical of guys who never were able to put that behind them. And, but in his case he had and that, that was what he wrote me about on that occasion.

Q: What about some other sort of....

CHUCK JURAN: [LAUGHS] Gosh, it's hard to extract things like that.

Q: How about then, let's see, something else. In what ways has your father's relationship with you served as a, a role model and an example for what you've tried to do with your own children?

CHUCK JURAN: I've tried to do some things differently. As I mentioned, we moved around a lot in those days. He started out in the Chicago area. We moved from an apartment to an a couple of houses in the suburbs. And then he was transferred to the New York area. And then we went to Washington and back to New York. So I was, decided I wasn't going to move when I had a family, and we didn't. My kids grew up in the same house for twenty years. And you know, the kids grow up normal moving around but to me that was a disruption. And I didn't care for it. I don't know if it bothered the others as much as it did me. But it was something that he, he'd cast his lot with the Bell System and when they say go you go.

And then the war came along and...my father, he is a sucker for the Star Spangled Banner. To, I, I don't know how I could emphasize that enough to, to give you the idea of how deeply he feels about that. Every fourth of July he

reads the Declaration of Independence from beginning to end.

So when the war came there was no question that he would do what was necessary to help us win that war. And in 1941 there, there were no protests in the streets and nobody was marching with signs. Everybody wanted to win that war. There was no dis, dissention in this country like you see today.

So he went down to Washington and he, he almost went broke working for the government. He was working ninety hours a week down there lend lease. And those, there was a lot of disruption in our family in those years. He didn't have the time for, I, I, I don't think it, it affected me as much as it did the others. But, well, Donny was little but the, my brother and sister, they, they probably could have used more of his time in those years.

Q: This is a hard thing for me to try and figure out. I mean I've, I've heard about the lend lease years. Here, your father grew up in such extraordinary poverty. Knew what it meant to have nothing. Knew what it did to the children and the whole family situation. And yet here he, I mean even with the patriotism, took the family to Washington. As you say, almost went broke. Totally disrupted a life. Put it in jeopardy, if you will. When he clearly didn't have to do that. And I mean how involved was the rest of the family in the decision to completely shake up your lives and really push you all close to the edge?

CHUCK JURAN: I don't think it was, of course I was just a little kid -- in 1941 I was ten years old and I'm sure -- I was involved when the decision to move down there --

because he thought it was a short span and he would just commute to....that didn't last very long. The, we weren't, we weren't in dire circumstances. There was always plenty to eat and we had what we needed and so forth. But I don't think there was a lot of discussion about something like that. It was something he just had to do.

There was a terrible imperative in this country to, to win that war. And the, the alternatives were, were dreadful. I don't think there was much disagreement about that. So...and I don't know the circumstances under which he got that job. But we were, we were losing the war to -- I think he went down to Washington -- we moved there in the summer of 1942. By that time the Japanese had overrun the Pacific all the way to Wake Island. And they were threatening Australia. The, Europe was under the Nazis. They were in North Africa. And it wasn't at all sure we were going to win. That was, it was just a question of priorities and a lot of families suffered worse than us. They had people killed in the war and so forth. So nobody felt like we were making a huge sacrifice.

And Washington was a very interesting place to be during the war. It was fascinating. Of all the things going on down there and...as, as kids we were right in the middle of that. We could take a bus into downtown and, and see some of the things going on. And it was a very interesting time.

Q: Are there pictures of your family at that time? I mean if we were to want to somehow document the time that your family spent in Washington? Can we walk around with a camera?

CHUCK JURAN: Well there's, there's some home movies and I, I have, I brought along some stills from those movies in fact, pictures of, of us during those years and before. I was interested in photography in those days and had a little darkroom. So I did a lot of pictures at that stage of the game.

Q: How about at home, I know when I grew up in the house if dad said no I'd ask mom and maybe she'd say yes. How did, how did those roles function in your family?

CHUCK JURAN: I don't recall that they had a lot of disagreement about....that kind of thing. So I didn't give them a lot of trouble. I was involved in my own little activities. I had a lot of things I was interested in and if the truth be known, I, I suppose they had more problems with my older brother and sister. So I didn't get into that too much. But he was, of course, someone who commuted away from home and was gone a lot. And my mother had the burden of, of, of a lot of this stuff. I don't recall that we had a particularly rigid family structure. I was much more of a disciplinarian than my father was in raising children.

Q: That sort of thing probably skips generations.

CHUCK JURAN: That's my impression. [LAUGHS]

[END OF RECORDING]

Video Roll #23

Q: [DIRECTIONS]....nice stuff.

CHUCK JURAN: Down there, down the, it's just a shame you got to...on a day like this. This is a spectacular view.

Q:not so bad. In, there's, there's a huge folder. I know that one of the grandchildren was talking about moving to Israel. Was it your son?

CHUCK JURAN: No, I think it's Donny's son. And he was over there for a while in a kibbutz. But he came back.

Q: Because religion never came up in any discussion. Were there any practicing religions?

CHUCK JURAN: I think something that a lot of us share is a contempt for organized religion. Certainly I've inherited that. [LAUGHS] And my, my uncle has. And I, my dad doesn't have a lot of use for the, the priests and, and the mumbo jumbo and so forth. Now my brother, of course, is very much a practicing Jew. But he's the only one. And I don't know why the, I, I guess my grandmother, whom I never met, apparently was a very religious person. But not much of this came down the line to everybody else. We never, we never went to church and it was just not a big deal.

Q: If you were to look at this, what devils do you think Joe, I mean here's a man who basic, he's done it. He's achieved it. He's, you know, and yet every single day, you know, up in the morning, works until he goes to sleep. Doesn't have to do anymore.

CHUCK JURAN: What makes Sammy run?

Q: What makes Joey run?

CHUCK JURAN: My uncle is, is the same way. And it's, I don't know, I've got some of that in me but not to that degree by any means. He has, he has no distinction between work and recreation. He's doing exactly what he loves to do. I don't remember him pursuing it to the degree that he does now. Maybe he feels time's running out and he's got to get all these things done. I'm not sure about that but...I, I really don't recall him being possessed to the extent that he is now. And that's the only reason I, I can see for it. He, he took more leisure time than, than times gone by.

Of course, when he was an employee things were different because he had a, a more defined work day. And although he had other things going on it wasn't to the extent that it is now. So it's, it's a temptation to walk by that desk and not say well, there's something I can get going on.

I think this has been a progression as time has gone on, that he wants to get more and more things done. And he pursues it that way and to the exclusion of a lot of other stuff. When, when he lived in New York they went to the theater a lot. They joined the Metropolitan Museum and went to shows and exhibits and there was a lot more of that sort of cultural activity. Of course the opportunities were there that you don't have in Ridgefield. But I think as time has gone on he's just devoted more and more time to his field to the exclusion of everything else.

I would exclude from that some of the family things. He'll drop everything if the grandchildren show up and that, that has a high priority. But there's, there's forces at work

there that I don't understand. Certainly there's no issue of survival anymore. That, that part's behind him, I'd say. It's a question of what you've got to, want to get done with the time that's left.

Q: You're in a related field. You are an engineer as well. How do you assess, as an engineer, the contributions of Joseph Juran?

CHUCK JURAN: Well, it's, there's a, an element of luck in, in being in the right place at the right time. He rose to pre-eminence in the field of quality at a time when quality became an important thing. If his field had been butterflies it would have been different. He would have still become the top butterfly man in the world, probably. But it would never have been a big deal. So the luck involved is that his, his stature peaked at the time when this became important. You can't predict those things. It's two forces that just happen to collide at, at the right time. And so that's why the whole thing, the, became important in the light in which we see it today it, the emergence of the, of the Japanese as a competitor in the world market and he happened to be, be there at the right time. But I have no doubt that whatever, it was just a fluke that he went into, to quality.

It's a fluke that my uncle went into architecture. Those things are chance. He was, he wanted to be an engineer like his brother. And but he got in the wrong line at college. [LAUGHS] And they told him, well, they're all the same courses for the first two years anyway. So you may as well just sign up. And then he found he had a flair for it and so forth.

So there's a, an element of luck involved. But I, I do believe he would have achieved pre-eminence in whatever he'd gone into, certainly in any kind of technology.

Q: Being in the field, what was the first time that, that you were aware that somebody, your father had somehow preceded you in all of this?

CHUCK JURAN: Well, when I was at Cornell I was on a track called industrial engineering and that has to do with the management of manufacturing operations and so on. So around my third or fourth year we took some courses in quality and the dean of the school, Andrew Schultz, began to mention some of the contributions my father made. Now that was in the early '50s. And he was by no means the, the world figure he is today. But the handbook had been published and so he was, he was known in that field and I think that at that time I, I became aware that this is more than just a, a casual calling that he had gone into and that he had become important in, internationally, really.

Q: [UNCLEAR] told the story about walking out of the restaurant, and I guess there were three of you and somebody goes....[UNCLEAR].

CHUCK JURAN: I remember that. He said it was at (Redlands) but it happened down here in Anaheim when we were all having dinner. And in fact the, the quality society was having a meeting there and there were constant interruptions with these fellows that just wanted to say hello or shake his hand or take a picture or something of that sort.

And those things are good for the ego. He has ego just like everybody have, much like the rest of us. And the....

Q: When did you realize he was actually almost a celebrity, though?

CHUCK JURAN: I think that evolved later, after I got out of school. I was in the engineering field for ten years but mostly in marketing. And I, I really didn't get involved in the quality area. But I got a call from a, one of the department managers at Lockheed in quality and he wanted me to know if I'd come and work in his department. And I knew that he didn't want me because I knew anything about quality. He wanted a guy named Juran working for him. And I think at that point I realized [LAUGHS] that, that there was something to this name that was, that a, affected the course of what I did and, and even in a little town like Redlands, people see articles here and there or, or get something in the mail that, and ask me about it. It's, it's an unusual enough name that they figure you're related.

Q: Is there a down side to having the Juran name?

CHUCK JURAN: Oh, I don't think so. It, I think if I had stayed in, in engineering maybe people would have figured well, you know, what happened to you? [LAUGHS] You come from pretty good stock and...but I got out of that in, in 1966. And except for my involvement with the Institute on, on the board, it doesn't really get into the, the kinds of things that I do.

I, I'm kind of proud when people mentioned it and, and well at least one of us amounted to something. It's, it was a source of family pride to me.

Q: Do you remember the apartments in Chicago and you walk into the institute in Connecticut, what must it feel like?

CHUCK JURAN: Well, it's, I remember a little bit about Chicago. We moved out of there, I think in 1937, and Chicago was a, a kind of a grungy place. It was in the depression. Although I think it was a better place to live then than it is now, for all the, the hard times. And I remember they took their first real vacation while I lived there. I didn't go. They took my brother and drove a 1936 Oldsmobile to Yellowstone. And that was a real adventure. The, the roads weren't so hot in those days and it's a pretty good drive. But they drove all the way out there and saw the bears and so forth. And I don't think my dad had been anyplace before then, except for coming to America. And that was really a, in fact, he didn't go overseas until my freshman year in college was his first trip out of this country. So that would have been about 1950. He was 46 years old and he hadn't been out of the country except as an immigrant.

Q: When did he go to Japan?

CHUCK JURAN: I think '51 or '52 was his first trip to Japan. This was a trip to Europe. And I'm pretty sure that was their first trip abroad.

Q: Can you contrast the grunginess of Chicago at the time with, you know, the, the impressiveness of walking into a building that has your family name on the outside?

CHUCK JURAN: I know, it's, it, it does bring home to you how, how far people have come. But that's the, the entire family has done that. Look at what my uncle has achieved here in the, in the picture business. And he's got an Oscar around here someplace and, and another Academy Award nomination besides that. He made that same climb. I have no doubt that my Aunt Minnie, if she had had the educational opportunities as a girl, would have achieved just the same kind of stature. She's built of the same stuff. And his older brother became a prominent bond broker in Minneapolis. There's a firm there that still bears his name. So it, it's a great American story.

Q: Your sister made the observation that whatever it is ought to be bottled and sold.

CHUCK JURAN: [LAUGHS]

Q: How about the other side of it? You know, as an engineer, if you could re-engineer some parts of your father's life in relationship with, what, what would you like to re-engineer?

CHUCK JURAN: Well I, I think we were always a little thin on the social side. And I had to learn a lot of those skills later, what I did learn. Because we didn't, we didn't have dinner parties. I didn't know how to act as a host or anything like that. Most of the contacts are primarily for

business purposes and we didn't do much of that at home. We, we pretty much stuck to ourselves. And, and so it wasn't a real social situation. I had to, I had to learn a lot of that on my own.

And it's, it, people are just made up differently. I'd, my idea is to take a little more time to smell the flowers, although I've got a lot of him in me. And it, it's just a mix. Everybody has to work that out for themselves as to how they're going to divide the, those things up.

Q: What are some of the glad [UNCLEAR]? What is it, or you're not so happy with?

CHUCK JURAN: Well, as I say, the best thing anybody can have going for them is to be born in the right family and we were very fortunate in that regard to inherit some brains. I think all of us did to some extent. And he has a reverence for education. He, he put up trust funds to educate his grandchildren. And that was so important to him to see that everybody got that. Because that was what liberated him from those god awful jobs and the circumstances he was in. He, he has a tremendous feeling for the University of Minnesota because they took an independent kid and gave him that chance.

And, and he has these feelings about education which immigrants today don't seem to have. They don't, they don't understand that that's the, that that's the way out. And, and today it's available to everybody. And they'll, they'll pay your way. The, the opportunities are much greater than they were then. They'll teach you the language. They'll do all those things that he had no help on. So the, the

importance of education I, I think is the, is a great gift that, that we all had.

Q: That's perfectly [UNCLEAR]. What of him do you wish was not so prominent and so...

CHUCK JURAN: Well, I'm, I'm impatient. I may be more impatient than he is. I'm not sure. But I don't like to wait in line. I don't like to be interrupted with things that I don't think are important. I think I've inherited a lot of that kind of stuff and they're, they're good characteristics in a way because it, it gets your priorities straight. But interacting with other people is not so good.

Q: Priorities is an interesting word. If you're sort of looking at your father scientifically, what do you have been his priorities over the years? What, if you stack them up, what drove him into the role he played?

CHUCK JURAN: Well I, his family always came first. But he, because of the, the years in which he was a breadwinner, that took a different form than it does today. Today, when you say the family comes first that means you go to the Little League games and you join the PTA and that kind of thing. In the '30s there was survival. And he went, he went to law school at night be, he was afraid he'd lose his job at the...well that Western Electric plant went from something like 40,000 employees to 7,000 during the Depression. And you'd dread every Friday thinking that slip's going to be in your envelope and how are you going to feed your family? He was, he was marked by that. Everybody that went through that period was.

I was just a little kid but I remember a lot of those feelings. So he, he stayed in the Army Reserves. He went to law school and did these things to be sure that there'd be another string in his bow if something happened to, to his job. And he told me he sat up nights worrying about that and said it's a frightening thing. But today when somebody's out of work it, it means you, maybe you cancel the cable TV and tighten your belt a little bit but it's not a question of survival points. That's not in the cards anymore.

Q: If you, if you had to tell somebody about Joseph Juran, the guy behind the [UNCLEAR], what one incident would you relate to them that somehow captures what Joe Juran is, the man personally?

CHUCK JURAN: [LAUGHS] It's, it's hard to pick an incident. A story I like to tell people is [for some reason my mother had accumulated a spare dining room set and he wanted that thing out of the garage. And nothing would convince her to get rid of it. And he said what are you keeping it for? And she said well, maybe I'll sell it. He says how much do you think you can get for it?] And she said a hundred dollars. And he reached in his pocket and he peeled off a hundred dollars and gave it to her. And we took it out in back and burned it.

And that, that's his, the logical approach to solving a problem. And he, he doesn't have a lot of tolerance for people who can't see through the problem in, in the, in the straightforward way. But....

Q: Why do you think someone who watches public television would be interested in a program on the life of Joseph Juran? He's not Clark Gable or...

CHUCK JURAN: Well, to me biographies are fascinating in any, in any regard. But when you look at this life it, it's the real American dream. And the thing that makes it interesting is the, the period of time when it took place with all these great events, all the technology that happened during this period of time and how he happened to be in a lot of these places at those times.

If you're interested in the history of industries and management the things that happened at the Hawthorne works are very important. Not just the quality stuff but the, the studies they did in, in motivation of, of employees. And what makes them tick and they, they came across a lot of that stuff by accident in some of the studies they did. Those are still very important things in, in the history of....

[END OF RECORDING]

Video Roll #24

CHUCK JURAN: I was making a crate to send my typewriter up there. And so I grabbed some wood and made a box for it. Oh, uh, it turned out it was a extra leaf for the dining room table. And, uh, my uncle happened to be there when this was going on. So he said, (Laughter) always enjoyed that story. I remember him telling that at, uh, the 50th wedding anniversary party we had. Uh, he flew everybody down to San Diego, his sisters, uh, children. We

just drove down. We lived nearby. But we had the whole gang down there to celebrate their 50th anniversary. And we did the same thing with the 60th, um, back on the East Coast. Now they've got ... I mean, they are their 65th this year.

Q: Are you a sentimental guy?

CHUCK JURAN: Very much so. Very much so.

Q: Wouldn't have guessed that.

CHUCK JURAN: Well, it, uh ... it ... I guess I've been around him enough. I can kind of read some of these things. I ... it's, uh ... well, I'm sitting there with my wife at the table. And we're ... and we're ... we were at their house. And, uh, she starts to say something. And I'll ... I'll stop her. Because I know he's about to say something. Or I can tell when he's going to crack a joke. Or when he's got something to say. Or when he's not going to say something. And I guess it's the matter of exposure and you've learned to read the moods, and so forth.

Q: He's apparently struggling with, uh, the autobiography.

CHUCK JURAN: Uh-huh.

Q: Like to ... at some priorities ... write a book about his life. And he ... I said, "Well, what would you call it?" Thought about it. He said he didn't have the title yet. What

... what would you suggest to your father as a ... might be an appropriate title for his book?

CHUCK JURAN: I don't ... to me the whole story of ... of the family is ... it's the American dream. That's a ... that's an overworked phrase, but that's exactly what it is. And, uh, I love to read those stories about people who start with nothing and, uh, and really make it in this country. I've read a thousand of them. And I think that's interesting to people.

Q: It's interesting to read about them. But why do you think more people aren't able to achieve what he does? I mean, the pasts are equally clear. Or that'll it be luck.

CHUCK JURAN: No, it can't all be luck. Uh, he ... he ... he ... he was born with an unusual amount of intelligence that put him head and shoulders above anybody else. And then it was a question of getting into a field where that ... where that could be mobilized and put to use. And, uh, of course, he has a tremendous discipline for work. And, uh, it's ... to ... the people who have succeeded in our family, and I'm not just talking about my father, have all done it the same way. They found something and they were good at it. They were ... they found something they were very good at. And they worked at it for decades. Uh, and if you do that, you can't miss. Uh, it's just bound to work.

Q: You ... you talked about, in the beginning, that he had great difficulty with interpersonal relationships, you know, at work. Literally punishing co-workers with his intelligence. Something happened that enables him to turn

the corner. And put that behind him. You mean ... I think you can said that. He has no patience with people who can't put their devils behind them. What was the experience that ... that enables your father to do that?

CHUCK JURAN: I'm not sure as any one incident, but he is, uh ... I've talked about that with him. And, uh, he said ... he said he had no problem with his subordinates. He could work with them just fine. He had no problem with his superiors. But with ... with his equals, with his peers in the organization, he had a lot of difficulty. And I think he's speaking primarily of his years in the Bell System. Now that's, of course, that's a ... a bureaucracy, or was then, I'm sure it still is. And, uh, we talked about religion and other things. Another thing I think we ... most of us have in common is that we don't have a lot of patience, uh ... uh, with bureaucracies. Uh, that's why you find a lot of self-employed people in our clan. We don't make good employees. And, um, he had an independent streak. I've got a lot of that in me. And I can understand that. And, uh, I ... I think a lot of it was just impatience with the structure and, uh, when he went into the government, uh, uh, he probably realized that it isn't just the Bell System, it's everywhere in a big organization. And the answer to that is to strike out on your own and make your own rules.

Q: What about the Knots forlune(?) task(?) What you thought of it? Do you think it really ... really ought to be on this tape?

CHUCK JURAN: Gosh, it's ... it's such a complex thing to try to summarize a life as unusual as that. Uh, I think

he's, uh ... I think he's done an awful lot of good in the field he's in. Uh, and, especially right now when the economy needs that kind of knowledge to improve our competitiveness. And, uh, he feels like he has a mission to do that. And a lot of what he does on the ... on the government level is gratis. Because he feels so, uh, strongly about that. He was going down to do something to Navy one time. And he said he didn't charge them. He said it's my Navy, too. And, uh, that, uh ... that is attitude about it. I think the central themes in his life are the, uh, the family, and the importance of education. And the reverence for this country. And that comes through in the work he does.

Q: He's achieved so much. What's been the flip side do you think? What ... what is the price that your father has paid for all that output?

CHUCK JURAN: I think that it's been a price in some family relationships. I was ... I was the fortunate one. But, uh, my brothers and my sister have had problems. And I don't know if more of his time would have solved that or not. He, uh ... he carries a lot of that baggage around with him. He, uh ... it's, uh ... to him it's a heavy burden. And, uh, I think he's, uh, he carries a lot of guilt because of their problems. Rightly or wrongly. Uh, I think he blames himself more than he should. But, uh, I know he carries it around with him. And, uh, you have to make these choices on, uh, how you want to spend your time and energy. And, uh, there's no answer for everybody. You got to make your own choices. And he's made his. And, uh, uh, he certainly made the most of it. My ... my choices have been different. But, uh, everybody has to figure that out for themselves.

Q: Howland, is there anything else that you think we should be covering?

HOWLAND: Um, yeah. Maybe if you spend a little bit of time chatting with Chuck about the relationship between, uh, his father and mother and he answers those (Inaudible) relatives, or

Q: When I go to the stories, my kids would tell about my wife and me. I'd probably want to beat 'em up a little bit for saying it. Um, how about the ones that you're ... you're comfortable in relating? You know, the Ozzie and Har ... they don't seem like Ozzie and Harriet.

CHUCK JURAN: No, they're not ... they're certainly not Ozzie and Harriet. The, uh ... when I was growing up, of course, the women stayed home and, uh, ran the house. And our family was no exception to that. Uh, we also had the situation where, for one reason or another, my mother never learned to drive. Uh, which is a major thing in ... in, uh, the kind of life you lead. We always lived in the suburbs until they moved to New York after all of us left home. They moved into New York City. So, uh, it's hard for me to imagine the way ... the way, uh, my family grew up, being out there in the suburbs without ... without an automobile. Uh, a lot of the places we lived you could walk conveniently to things. But it still is a big limitation. I think some of the best times they had together were when they moved into Manhattan and lived at UN Plaza. Uh, they did all the ... my mother said it was like moving into a candy store. And they did all the shows and the museums. And they did all that

stuff together. And, uh, I think it was a great time for them. And they had the freedom, uh, to some extent, from family responsibilities. Because we had all moved away by that time. So, uh, I think they had some good years there. The war years were not so hot, uh, for the reasons that, uh, they had to spend so much time away from home. Uh, before then ... I'm going backwards here ... but, Summit, New Jersey, where we lived when he worked at the Bell System headquarters in New York. Uh, that was a pretty nice town. And we were, uh ... uh, I think if we had stayed in Summit, uh, some of the kids might turn out a little differently. But, uh, it was not to be.

Q: In speaking to your sister, she had said that, uh, that she had a real terrible time, I think, a five or six year stretch. Um, and it sounded very mysterious and ... and not good at the same time.

CHUCK JURAN: I'm not, uh, completely sure what she was referring to. Uh, she, um, my mother characterized her as once saying she did everything at the wrong time. Um, I (Laughter) ... I suppose there's some of that. I know, uh, it took her a long time to struggle through all this education. Not because she lacked the ability. She's brilliant. But, uh, got side tracked into complete political causes and, uh, and so forth. And, uh, of course, Sylvia never married. And, uh, I think that's something, uh, that she feels like she's missed out on. But, uh, my dad is crazy about little girls. And they had a pretty good relationship. Uh, he's, uh, where grandchildren are concerned, the daughters definitely have the, um, the front track. And, uh,

he's just ... he's always been crazy ... I know that's certainly been the case with my daughters.

Q: Was there sibling rivalry in your family among the (?) I know there's three of your clustered together as a ?

CHUCK JURAN: I don't remember much in the way of rivalry. Uh, we were so different. Uh, and I don't recall competing for parents' attention or anything like that. Uh, but there may have been some on the other side. My ... my sister says to me that I identified with my dad. And so I ... I had easy sailing. Because I was always building things with an erector set, and model airplanes. And the kind of thing that he could relate to you. And, uh, I suppose some of that's true. And, uh, I went to engineering school, which is something he was very interested in seeing me do. And, uh ... but, uh, I wasn't aware of particular rivalry.

Q: Bob was kind of an enigma. Uh, he is the only one of the four children that were not speaking about video. What ... what happened? What ... why is ... why is Bob such a mysterious creature?

CHUCK JURAN: He's ... he's had a tough time. And I haven't seen Bob probably for twenty five years, thirty five years, maybe. My dad felt like Bob got shortchanged, uh, in that they did not understand the forces at work when another child came along. He was getting all the attention. And all of a sudden here comes a daughter. And, uh, my father's nuts about daughters. And, uh, he feels like he was marked from that. And that it got him on a bad track. And I'm

enough of a psychologist to know how much of that is true. Uh, but I do know he's had a very tough life. And, uh, one job after ... the one thing he's good at ... I'd said you could be successful working at something for decades that you're good at. It didn't work (Laughter) in case. He's very good at journalism, uh, but he ... he, uh, is not so hot on the ... on the human relationships. And so he's flittered from one job to another. And, uh, he's kind of missed the mark. It's been a very unfortuate thing.

Q: No re-approach him off with your father? I mean, here is the first born. His son.

CHUCK JURAN: Um, I'm not into that too much. I ... I know they see him from time to time. They've helped him over the years. Uh, there's been no end to that. But, uh, he's ... he's difficult to be around. And I'm sure they feel that way, just like everybody else.

Q: Best family time you all spent together. That will be my last question.

CHUCK JURAN: (Laughter)

Q: You're all together

CHUCK JURAN: You mean the best, uh, event? Or ?

Q: Whatever. Best event. The best thing is they ... this is my family. This is my father. This is ... we're all together.

CHUCK JURAN: Well, we've gotten together on a number of occasions. Uh, even in recent years I ... uh, it brings to mind the wedding anniversaries they've had. And a month ago, uh, everybody put on a 60th birthday party back in New York. When my dad was 80, we had a big party at their house. And, uh, an awful lot of people there. The children, grandchildren, uh, and so forth. And, uh, I suppose we had ... must have had twenty people in the room. And, uh, I heard my dad say to my mother, "Look what we created." And I thought that was pretty good. That they ... they realized they were the origin of, uh, of everything there. And all the people in that room. And, uh, it had grown into something pretty substantial. Uh, that's very important to him. He ... he may spend, uh, twelve hours at the desk. But, uh, the family thing is very important. He just handles it in a different way.

Q: Thank you Mr. President (?). You brought pictures with you?

CHUCK JURAN: I should have brought that up from the motor home. I'll ... I can go down and get that. And you see if there's anything ... I'm not sure it's anything you can use. But

[END]