



Yo, Adrian!

By Kim Radison, SPHR

“It’s the eye of the tiger, it’s the thrill of the fight, rising up to the challenge of our rivals.” As the band Survivor belts out these popular eighties lyrics, who can’t help but envision Rocky Balboa training for his next boxing title? I myself knew little about Rocky other than these popular song lyrics, until recently, when my husband pulled out his old VHS collection of Rocky I-V and invited me along on a week-long Rocky movie marathon.

Even though the original Rocky won an Academy award, I wasn’t expecting much from the saga other than a couple of bloody boxing matches and a good soundtrack. Each night during the week, though, I plunged deeper into the inspiring life of Rocky and his sweetheart, Adrian. From the near upset victory of a long shot underdog to a heavyweight title and international victory, the action of Rocky could keep anyone on the edge of their seat from round one until the final ring of the bell. And as the finishing blows of the no-holds-barred street fight of Rocky V came to a dramatic end and Rocky was left with a smile on his face and an arm around Adrian, I was reminded of two universal, undying principles, undoubtedly the reason that Rocky series will be remembered as one of the best of all time.

The first principle is that of unselfish love. Rocky had a pure, unselfish love for his soulmate Adrian. He didn’t care where she worked (the local pet shop), what she looked like, who her family was, or even if she reciprocated Rocky’s feelings. Adrian, in turn, came to know and love Rocky the man, not Rocky the fighter, Rocky the champion, or Rocky the country’s hero. No matter how hard times were, they loved each other and put the interests of the other first. They never quit forgetting that the only fight worth going the distance for is the fight of love.

Secondly, the series teaches us that the root of all happiness is not found in material possessions, fame, or the other fleeting definitions of success that have failed us time and time again. Happiness comes in the finding of ourselves, of who we are, of who we were meant to be, and in living our dream. In Rocky V, my favorite installment of the series, Rocky loses his career, his title, his money, and all of his riches. His life appears to be in shambles, as his family is forced to move back to the ghettos of Philadelphia where Rocky’s otherwise Cinderella story started. It is in this ghetto, though, that Rocky ultimately realizes that what makes him the man that he is are the things that money could never buy: the skill of a fighter, the heart of a lover, the sensitivity, pride, and joy of a father.

Adrian reminds Rocky, and all of us, of the importance of these principles when she tells him, “Rocky, I don’t care about the money; it’s you. That’s all that matters.” May we all hear the wisdom of Adrian and accept it with the heart of Rocky.