

Ken Morgan

By Anna Pratt

A passionate 'doer'

A motivational speaker, image consultant and clothier talks about transformation from the inside out

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For Kenny Ray Morgan, a motivational speaker, image consultant and founder of Morgan's Custom Clothiers, which he operates from his Eden Prairie office, doing what he loves isn't just a side project or a hobby. That is how he makes his living.

Everyday he works with business executives, athletes, lawyers, doctors, politicians and entertainers, among others, to polish their appearance, such as with a one-of-a-kind suit. On the flip side, as a sought-after motivational speaker, he brings a message about professionalism and personal development that goes well beyond first impressions, to people from all walks of life.

Morgan regularly visits local rotaries, business chambers and schools; has addressed the Minnesota Workforce about assisting women to re-enter the job market; and traveled to Camp Riley this summer to talk to at-risk teenage boys. Ironically, he has found fulfillment in encouraging others to pursue their passions. "I can truly say I'm blessed to be living my dream," he gushed, adding, "Getting paid to do it is like a bonus."

The style/motivational guru says he is uniquely qualified to provide such insight to individuals and large groups. As a veteran of the corporate world, he held various positions in finance, sales, marketing and public relations at several major companies before opening Morgan's Custom Clothiers in 1995.

It took him a good part of a decade to gain the courage to act on his creative impulses, despite floundering as an accountant up until that point. "When we walk by fear instead of faith it has a tendency to eat away at our confidence, self-worth and self-



esteem," he said.

Bearing that in mind, Morgan hopes other people will be moved to act sooner than he did. To achieve happiness in one's work, "it has to be something that you are sincerely passionate about," that in turn will "inspire you to a level of enthusiasm that will be unmatched by anything else," according to Morgan.

He is the first one to admit, however, that embarking on a new venture has practical downsides. For example, going into the custom clothing business, something he'd been exposed to at his mother's shop earlier on, meant making less money right away, while there were no long-term guarantees.

But for him, his hard work paid off. From the custom clothing business,

the motivational speaking gigs arose, particularly out of the popular "Dress for Success" seminar that Morgan still delivers. Talking to crowds- the bigger the better- is the job he enjoys best.

Some of his other programs, in which he covers commitment, goal-setting and image, among other topics, include "7 Keys to Becoming a Winning Professional in the 21st Century," "Mama Said That There'd Be Days Like This: If It's To Be, It's Up To Me!" and "Rising Above Mediocrity!"

Although he doesn't expect everyone to follow in his footsteps, during his seminars, the speaker elaborates, "I talk about being in transition and taking risks. I explain that for things to get better, I have to be better. I

go through how to get over fear of rejection."

The antidote to a laundry list of phobias, Morgan asserts, is action. By and large, he believes people are drawn to him because of his candor. "I'm authentic onstage. I go into things other people wouldn't. I spill my guts. They can identify with that. But I don't just talk about problems. I give solutions," he said.

Although it may not seem immediately apparent, he maintains that motivational speaking and custom clothing go hand-in-hand. "The main thing I like to do with clothing is make people feel more confident. Then they're ready to handle anything without worrying about their appearance. They can use their minds to be more productive."

Even when he's not officially working, Morgan tries to be productive. For instance, while he works out at the gym, he is often rewriting speeches in his head. Right now, Morgan is putting the finishing touches on his third DVD/CD program, "8 Goal Keys & Nuggets That Turn Dreams Into Reality." He is also in the middle of penning his first book, in which he will flesh out some of these lessons.

"Every day I'm working on my subject matter, monitoring a speech or listening to a session. I'm always studying, always reading," he said.

Bill Roddy, a cofounder of the Minneapolis-based Osiris Organization that works with at-risk youth, has high praise for Morgan. Roddy is in the custom clothing business himself, thanks to Morgan's influence. "I'm not very motivated by people whose lives contradict what they are saying but if you watch Ken's behavior over time, his (life) validates what he is saying," he said.

And as someone in Roddy's line of work, "My whole life is geared around some of the topics Ken is touching on," he added.