A Birthday with ‘Ohana
By Dr. Richard Kelley

I have always said that I am a very lucky guy. I was reminded of that last week as we gathered to celebrate my 80th birthday. First there was a coffee, cake and ice cream gathering at our executive offices in Waikīkī. I was presented with a wonderful book full of birthday greetings from the ‘ohana at our various properties across the Pacific Ocean – from the Hawaiian Islands to Australia, Fiji and Thailand. Many, many members of our ‘ohana worked together to make this happen. My sincere thanks to you all.

In the evening, I gathered with members of my extended family. It was a very special occasion because every one of my descendants was there.

- Seven amazing, wonderful and accomplished children.
- Thirteen charming grandchildren.
- Two beautiful great granddaughters.

I took the opportunity to give a few words of advice to the younger generations. Here’s an excerpt of what I said:

Thank you for your presence here tonight. It means a great deal to me that you would take time out of your holiday to be with me as we celebrate this occasion.

I never thought I would be celebrating my 80th birthday. That was something old people might do!

I have thought about what words of “octogeneric” wisdom I might pass on to the younger generations present this evening. Others far more articulate than I have also pondered what is really important in life, and I would like to quote their memorable prose to make some points that I hope will be meaningful.

One of my favorite quotes is from Randall Leighton: “Work like you don’t need the money. Love like you’ve never been hurt and Dance like no one is watching.”

In other words, life is short, live it fully and enjoy every day.

Along that line, Eleanor Roosevelt has been credited with saying: “Do one thing every day that scares you.”

Alexander Graham Bell is said to be the author of this next quote, which is quite meaningful to me: “When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one that has opened for us.”

I always try to learn from what happened yesterday but I also try to set my sights on tomorrow.

Rabbi Harold Kushner is credited with saying: “No one on their deathbed ever said, ‘I wish I had spent more time in the office.’”

In fact, Sam Walton, the founder of Wal-Mart, on his deathbed, is reported to have said the following about
the time he spent at the office vs. the time he spent at home: “I blew it!”

The one thing that amazes me at my time of life is how often one of my children or grandchildren will vividly recall and recount something I did with them or said to them years ago! Now, at age 80, I say to myself, “I am glad I had an impact on those children and grandchildren. I wonder how many opportunities I missed.”

So, I would like to leave the following words of advice as you help your children and grandchildren grow up in the today’s crazy, challenging world.

“Life is short. You have only one chance. Don’t blow it!”

We all lead busy lives, both at home and at work. At my age I see how important it is to enrich all areas of our lives. I know how hard you work at your jobs, building a better Outrigger Enterprises or whatever companies you work for, or may work for in years to come. Give it your best effort both at work and at home. Work hard, enjoy the camaraderie of your office ‘ohana, and relish the satisfaction of a job well done. Take time for your family and help it blossom through the generations.