

Lance Arm not-so Strong

Mark Lee Golden © 2013 www.markleegoldenwriter.com

I'm not interested in sports. Maybe I'm not a regular kind of guy. For instance, when talk comes up about the Super Bowl, I reply in jest, "I don't follow hockey." Neither do I follow bicycle races. Who's Lance Armstrong to me? An athlete/celebrity/a name. (I couldn't even spell athlete right. *Spell checker-thanks!*)

The man in the news is not one easily liked – not now. Whether it's a mix of media hype and human desires to root for those doing better than we can, this pedaler's achievements were rare. (I even had to double check that "root" was the correct spelling for what *I never do, root.*)

Here's what I think. The man stole from others. He took that which did not belong to him. It's criminal behavior on a different level, but not much from common thievery. When a thief steals an item, the owner's emotions are tied to it. Whether a yacht or a used television set – loss, injustice and a certain level of personal violation is felt. The finances involved are a separate pain.

Armstrong's theft takes away the belief that, maybe after all, humans are better than we thought. I know that guy can ride a bike faster than me. But, to win in a heated, strenuous competition amongst many strong men – even once – is remarkable. To win by his way, cheated the whole pack of do-gooders riding right behind him. He took the lead with false credentials. He made his body one hyped-up, chemically saturated muscle. Why? He doubted his own abilities...or refused to accept his limitations. His dishonesty stole from his heart, polluting his soul.

If you're reading this, you have limitations. A thief compensates differently than we do. A successful criminal can thrive on his continued success. To be the 7 time winner of a 23 day, French bicycle race? It takes a thief, apparently.

Not only did he steal from humanity the so much needed "we really are this good!" But, what of the Number 2s, the Second Place winners? I'm not going to Google that information. I just feel for the "true" winners, whose parties and international attention lacked what they deserved because of the hidden truth. Each one's glory and perseverance were deliberately pick-pocketed by Mr. Not So Strong after all and done so with a smile.

I think it's rare that a thief really gets it, really feels the violation they've done, the wreck to our sense of security. All we wanted from the Tour de France riders was to do their best. It's the spoken and unspoken expectation by everyone to everyone throughout all of life – whether one is walking or pedaling.