Going from a bookkeeping job in a Rural Bank in Iloilo, to working in Manila under a professional manager constituted a frog-leap, so to speak! He was not just an officer of Ayala Corporation who was seconded as vice-president to Makati Machinery Corporation, he was also a mentor to all of us. Working with him was discovering new dimensions in the busy atmosphere of office life. He shared everything he knew about being a manager because he wanted us all to be managers like him someday!

He was a people-person who cared about everyone, paying special attention to the service personnel, our messengers and janitors. He believed in all of us. He would send us love notes to express his appreciation for a job well done, no matter how small. It was one of his ways to motivate us and it worked! He would conduct open meetings within hearing distance of everyone. With him, there were no secrets. He wanted everything shared because he believed no one should be left out in situations when there could be knowledge and information that could be learned. And in meetings, there were many things one could learn especially by those aspiring to move up. He reminded us to have a pen and paper on hand and to take notes at times. He advised us not to trust our memory. He encouraged us to ask questions if there was anything unclear in our minds.

He believed buildings, equipment, and machinery were important but none of them could accomplish what his people could! He best described his management dictum in the parable of the “Mountain and the Squirrel.” As the story went, the squirrel kidded the mighty mountain that while he could not carry him on his tiny back, neither could the mountain crack a nut! How true because while he did not carry us on his back when he moved on to be an entrepreneur, being
the professional that he was, he cracked us open to the boundless possibilities and opportunities that life and business could offer.

I have practiced everything I learned from him, which have made a big difference in my development as a person and as a professional. Meet Mr. Cecilio Cruz, my first mentor extraordinaire!

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