

STEVE GOTTRY ON “DENIAL”
A True Story from THE ON-TIME, ON-TARGET MANAGER

The account in the book about the CEO’s father who died because he was a “Last-Minute Manager” in terms of his health is, sadly, a true story. Only it’s not really the CEO’s father who went into denial. It was my father.

My father underwent four long, grueling surgeries over a period of seven months—from March to September of 1995. Then he died, after spending just one week in a nursing home, in October 1995. It all began with an eight-hour operation for colon cancer, and ended with a two-hour “I’m sorry, there’s nothing more we can do” surgery. His body was filled with cancer.

About a year after he passed away, my mom was going through his personal papers when she stumbled across a hand-written note. It was dated “5/2” and it read:

*“For the past year and a half, indigestion has bothered me.
Now, the pains keep me awake, shooting up into my neck and
head and ears, after starting in chest and back.”*

Since this note was dated 5/2, it was written a minimum of 10 months prior to his first surgery. That means that my dad was in denial about his health for at least two years ... maybe even longer.

In our book, Ken and I write about the three outcomes of procrastination

- Lateness
- Poor quality work
- Stress for yourself and others

In my father's case, there may have been a fourth outcome: He may have caused his premature death. He certainly caused stress for himself and others.

Without intending to preach, my whole point is this: Please become a proactive on-time, on-target manager of your health. If you are over 50, get regular colonoscopies, especially if there is a history of colon cancer in your family. Get regular physicals. Get routine blood tests. Get EKGs and other diagnostic tests. If you smoke, quit. If you don't exercise, start now.

My father would have enjoyed seeing his grandkids graduate from college, get married, become a third grade teacher, an electronics whiz, a professional musician, and a public relations executive. He would have loved teaching the flute to his youngest granddaughter. But someone else will have to do that, because my father was a last-minute manager. Denial took him from us.