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10 How to buy successfully [11 Dec 2019]

Pressure advertising pushes people into making purchases. Price deadlines accelerate deciding and acting. To boost sales, merchants encourage impulse buying.

In contrast, I meet customer needs when the timing is best for *them*. When they are ready, I will be there. My goal is to benefit my customers, not my income.

If my philosophy reduces my sales by half, I am pleased that *I have not given half of my customers buyer's remorse*.

On the other hand, customers do not spontaneously imagine everything that can help them. Better advertising improves living by stimulating creative vision. There is a difference between impulse buying and informed choice. Deliberate and educated customers become satisfied loyal customers. They buy improvement.

Joining the happier group requires thought and discipline. Wise buyers study the logical connection between what they are offered and what they will *use successfully*. They can defend themselves from pressure tactics by realizing that if something will not be available next month or next year, maybe they don't need it right now either.

11 How to evade discouragement [23 Dec 2019]

The Lorado Taft sculpture (Fountain of Time) at the end of the Midway Plaisance in Chicago depicts the human family endlessly springing up ignorant, occupying the world stage for a period, and retreating into oblivion. It inspires introspection— “what am I doing with my turn on stage?”

Once I have become aware of my existence, surviving requires a threshold work ethic and realizing meaning requires a higher perspective. An even greater achievement is initiating improvement that endures beyond my physical presence. Hope is to seek a world renewed.

How well do I play on the world stage? Quantitative analysis (measuring) is a tool to improve my effectiveness, but my unique value is not established by a numerical score. Staggering unpopularity cannot take away the positive result of whatever is good in me. Quality, more than quantity, sets the mark that I leave on the world and makes me immune to discouragement.

12 Discover your happy [11 Feb 2020]

The grocery checkout line is more cheerful when I am in it. Casual conversation might break out while we wait. Laid-back body language signals the clerk to relax a little bit. Impatient gestures would spoil the whole effect.

Everybody at church is ever so nice. Some people come stressed, maybe a little depressed. However, once there, we get to know each other's strengths and weaknesses as we share concerns for the general welfare of our community. Even the tough questions are addressed with hope and encouragement. Of course! It's *church*, after all.

The car repair waiting room could be overflowing with frayed nerves. Customers might be stressed over the bill or the work hours they are missing. People in deep concentration appear sealed off, but rarely will they mind a smile with a few positive words like "nice shoes" or "what a well-mannered dog."

During my daily outdoor run, neighbors wave to me and occasionally call me by name. Even the car drivers try to be courteous by offering me the right of way.

Do you notice a "happy thread" connecting these stories? Do you notice the other connection, namely *my presence*? Does that give you ideas about how to spend *your* time? You *won't* follow me around all day to meet these very friendly people. You *will* give off the "happy light" that lets you see the same miracle I do every day.

If you wish it so, you will inhabit my "happy world" wherever you are. The elements are there when you *perceive* them to be!

Warning-- this condition is contagious.

13 You create your own world [14 Feb 2020]

Would you like today's title to be literally true? In every way? Would you launch into unbounded fantasy—able to *be anything you imagine*?

Of course you are not THE creator of THE world. But what if you could start a new one right now? How much of your present world *does* result from your choices? Your answer depends on your *point of view*, how you define the issue.

Monday's post taught that (a) there is light inside you (b) with which you perceive your counterpart in your environment. That is, the world is colored by the way you perceive it. You are not going to find "happy" if you have no capacity to imagine what that is.

Regardless of pre-existing circumstances, your world is effectively limited to what you want and *perceive* it to be.

In business law, we speak of “puff talk,” statements meant to provide mood and not to be scientifically measurable or demonstrable. The customer is given no objective proof that a product is “the best there is” or will “satisfy all of your needs.” Are motivational speeches merely puff talk? Let’s see what we can do with a few examples:

- You are responsible for what surrounds you.
- You have complete control over your circumstances.
- You achieved everything that is in your present world.
- You can be anything you want to be.
- You owe it to others to make a perfect world to share with them, and they owe the same to you.
- You can create anything you can imagine.

There are clearly limits, and every slogan above has many counterexamples. For instance, if one hundred living people want to be US President, something is going to give—not because too few are qualified, but because people don’t live long enough to survive one hundred four-year terms allowing everybody a turn. Technically speaking, motivational speeches are all puff talk meant to bolster a mindset without scientific proof of realism.

On the other hand, there are many examples (including this blog) of successes growing out of motivational training and positive mindset. Wisdom is distinguishing between quantitative failure (winning fewer votes) and qualitative success (changing society). We will never have *unanimity* (participants alike). Instead we will have *unity* (participants acting in good faith). This wisdom *creates* the better world.

I listen to speakers, trainers, coaches who illuminate steps leading to achieving specific written goals. In my world, success is not glitz and glamor; it is reassurance that I am contributing to good outcomes. Making a nurturing place for you is even more important than my individual survival.

Are you my co-creator of *this* happy world?

14 Noah complex [18 Feb 2020]

There is a religious viewpoint suggesting that I must find the *elect* or *chosen few* and bring them out of a corrupt world that is on its way to destruction. This separatist suggestion appears narrow and contrived.

I am energized instead by the viewpoint that I belong to the human family, which can use some help. My purpose and motivation lie in contributing improvement, sharing whatever I find to be good. To encourage others, it helps to be self-confident but not self-righteous. Growth is learning the viewpoints, weaknesses, and strengths of my family members so that I can understand and uplift them.

We are a disparate group but there is no need for discord. We may regard earning a living as a *struggle* but there is never reason to regard it as *fighting*. We are not competing against each other; our survival is collaborative. The foundation of mutual success is called love, and I love my family.

15 Peak motivation [21 Feb 2020]

People work harder for others than they do for themselves because humans are hard-wired for cooperation. For motivation, social value is stronger than self-interest.

Negative proof:--Recently a respected retirement home was saddened by the suicide of one of its most appreciated residents, a retiree from an active and productive career, father of several successful, caring children. Living with his wife, he was surrounded by healthy activities and supporting family—a prime prospect for an active retirement.

There was no surprise in his suicide. Being provided everything he needed, he was missing the most important ingredient of life: nobody [needed him](#). After a lifetime of caring for others, he was deprived of his vital identity as a nurturer.

Positive proof:--In my childhood I heard a father testify at church that his daughter was keeping him alive. He had experienced a difficult life that left him with a lovely pre-teen daughter and insignificant material possessions. He would have given up on himself, but he was sensitive to his daughter's needs and potential. Supporting her progress assured him purpose for staying alive.

A young mother survived drug addiction to save her daughter. Her first person account described frustration and drug abuse before her pregnancy. Eventually her caring human values and mother instinct made her sensitive to the needs of her daughter more than she had been to her own needs. Her courage to overcome addiction was realizing that more than her own life depended on recovery.

Discussion:--If you are keen on resistance training, you may be thinking that *adversity* makes us stronger. However, it is the *will*, not the resistance, that leads to strength. Addicts have excess adversity. The geriatric client could have sought out some worthy

cause for which to live, some adversity to overcome. Instead of being invigorated, he died internally lacking *motivation* to find and conquer a challenge. He thought all *his* needs were being met by other people and did not realize his overpowering *need to be needed by other people*.

Consider the power of empathy: The new name of this blog ***BeingForOthers*** reminds us that service to others is peak motivation.

16 So, what is needed? [24 Feb 2020]

In the prior post, we discussed people's need to be needed. It plays out sadly in pet food commercials that tug at owners' generosity emotions. Pets are supposed to give their owners happiness by gobbling up the advertised food. Careless owners are tempted to overindulge in watching their pets eagerly eating, resulting in obese pets. Carried to excess like this, the **artificial** need to be needed is injurious. In this post, we examine **what** is needed.

Insensitivity quickly becomes sinister. For example, people rightly feel needed when they practice empathy and encourage their neighbors to succeed. However, the process turns sour when domineering attention amounts to policing and punishing neighbors. It is a small fault to put enticing food in front of an overfed pet. It is a larger fault to put deleterious controls on suffering people—to take away the very tools they need to succeed.

Hurting people hurt people. Injurious behavior reveals that there is something missing in the psyche of the perpetrator. One possibility is that people do not act with love because they do not experience love. In the face of this deficiency, there is *harm* in taking something *away* from people whose needs are already not being met. Obese pets need regulated nutrition. The human offender needs psychological bolstering.

Forgiveness does not include being vulnerable to reinjury. We do not shower an offender with opportunities to go on offending. That said, we do not take away *beneficial* conditions. Antisocial behavior is not repaired by taking away *all* behavior. It is treated by replacing *bad* with *good* behavior. Injecting love into the void provides direction and fosters improvement.

In one example of restorative justice, there is no black-robed judge seated on an elevated platform. Instead, there is a round table providing equal dignity to all the parties involved in a resolution process. Participants examine the deficiencies that led to one or more infractions of rules. Together they carry out a program of reconstruction

and healing. Injuries may not be reversible, but the process redirects lives, and results in restored and improved social environment.

The best thing to be needed **for** is a better future.

17 Being for (and aware of) others [28 Feb 2020]

About the time I began public school, one of my pleasures was follow-the-dots drawing books. Simple designs were obvious from the positions of the numbered dots. In more complex drawings the numbering sequence called for running lines through the figures to add surprises; the objects became gradually recognizable. We were a frugal household, and each drawing book had to last about a month. I rationed the pleasure. So it didn't help when I had a guest who was gung-ho on doing follow-the-dots. He was polite; he asked permission before starting a new drawing. But I couldn't say no, so the outcome depended on his modesty, not my restraint.

Can you think of situations in the adult world where consumption by one person reduces the consumption by another person? The question might be much more serious than just *pleasure*. Overharvesting has made some plant and animal species "commercially extinct." On a larger scale, there is only one blanket of air covering our planet. Climate patterns are extremely complex, and it is not possible for a single country or community to protect and preserve its clean air supply. Greed (including pollution) anywhere hurts everyone everywhere, and ultimately human survival is at stake.

Between individuals or on a global scale, differential consumption may result in unfair depletion of shared resources. There are examples of naked power: emperors who relied on floods to "take care of" excess human population; modern armies that have starved local populations by confiscating their crops.

Human intelligence can do better than following the bad examples. We learn to balance distribution of production and consumption. In England this has meant concentrating on industrial exports in exchange for large-scale agricultural imports. Fairness and sustainability require balance so that both trading partners have enough equipment and enough food. Colonialism has been marked by imbalance: enriching dominant powers at the expense of the weak, exploiting instead of trading.

At a social dinner, people in line take portions based on how many people remain to be served. Like the drawing book story above, the dinner setting can be compared to a serious global issue: future generations await in the line. Some economists might advise countries with aging populations to increase their birth rates so that younger

people are produced to care for the elderly. That only shifts the sustainability problem from parents to offspring. One cannot increase the food per person by increasing the number of persons. In fact, unchecked human fertility is the biggest single threat to survival of the species, because feeding the population is not addressed by increasing the population. The principle applies to *all* shared resources.

Let us learn from today's stories the value of sharing across group sizes and across time periods. Being aware of others, producing and consuming accordingly, is the effective road to happiness.