

Monday Morning Motivation 8/23/2010



THE POSITIVE PLACE. SALES MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Inspiring a difference in life

Every few years or so, my wedding anniversary comes on a Monday, and I invariably mention it in Monday Motivation.

I mention it because of its importance to me, but also because it illustrates how important a person can be to making a difference in your life.

All of us have people in our lives that have made a difference -- our parents, our spouses, our kids are just some of them. Friends, co-workers, teachers, mentors, leaders, and others join the list. Some of these people are individuals we met in childhood; others are persons who have made a difference in our adult years.

Some of them have helped form us into the person we are -- and sometimes, we've become the person we are, despite their best efforts to make us better.

Each of them, man, woman, or child, has had an effect on us -- they've helped us define who we became. Some of them have made major differences in our life -- we would have chosen a different path without them, or perhaps our lives would have been vast wastelands of despair if they didn't come into our lives, and change those lives for the better.

It just goes to show you what a difference one person can make. I'm sure you can all remember someone who made such a difference in your life that there was a marked difference in the "before" and "after" you, just as if you'd been a set of photographs in one of those ads in the back of some magazine.

We need to find more of those people, of course, but more than that, we need to concentrate on being that kind of person in the life of someone else. I've had teachers who have changed my viewpoint of life, and I've tried, in turn, to give someone else something that helps them in a time of distress. I've been comforted by others, and have tried to comfort them. I've been helped through life by the ideas of other people, and

have tried to help someone else in turn.

We need to help other people, as we were once helped ourselves.

If, in your life, you made a positive difference to one person -- just one person -- then your life could be said to be a success. If you helped one person from loneliness, or stopped someone from looking toward suicide, or helped someone from making a stupid mistake that would disrupt their life -- your contribution is one of significance.

But the true leaders and mentors never seem to help just one person -- they go through life helping a multitude of individuals. Those "helped" individuals then help others, and those help others, and so on. Eventually, the contributions that have been made by that one caring person wind long beyond the solitary instance where they spoke up and helped someone else.

Like a pyramid scheme in reverse, the one person who helps someone else winds up influencing the lives of many, many other people, and the effect of their assistance is far greater than the number of people who will turn up to honor them at their funeral.

Now for the reason why I think of this at my anniversary time.

My wife Judy is one of those people who influences for good everyone she meets. She is engaging, motivating, kind, and positive. She helps others, inspires others, and makes them feel better about themselves. She actively works to make other people better, and the lives of many of the people she talks to, even casually, are influenced for good by her activities. I'm only one of many (perhaps the chief one of many) who is influenced by her kindness. As a result, the people she talks with help others, and they actively feel her spirit and influence. She has made such a significant difference in my life, that there is a "before" and "after." Sure, I'm still a project in progress, as many of us are, but I've still been influenced for good by her efforts. She means everything to me.

But beyond that personal reference, there have been others who have influenced me, and I'm sure there have been those who have influenced you. As an example, one class I took from a political science professor dramatically helped me to understand the structure of the government. I'd taken a number of political science classes before then, and I took a number after that one class -- but that one professor turned my understanding of the governmental process around. Another great teacher taught me communications law -- again, there was a "before" and an "after." A mentor taught me writing and editing -- and it was like night and day (any errors and bad habits that creep into my writing now are not his fault, I assure you.)

Parents are like that -- they help define us, and teach us, and as a result, make the inevitable "turning points" in our lives.

It's our challenge in life to help define those turning points for the people we interact with, helping them (and us) to become better. We, too, can help provide those interactions that make people better. We can inspire others and help them become better -- and as a side effect, help our own lives become better.

Now, this piece is dated for August 23, so forgive me as I close by saying Happy Anniversary to my sweetheart. You've made a wonderful difference in my life. Let's hope we all can make a positive difference in the lives of the people we meet.

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