

Monday Morning Motivation 9/13/2010



THE POSITIVE PLACE. SALES MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL GROWTH

7 things I've learned

I love lists, particularly lists that help me do a better job with my life. So here's one such list: **Things I've Learned (and am still learning):**

1. You can't change the past, so don't worry about it.

This is one of the most obvious rules on the face of it, but most of us worry to some extent about the past. We think about things we should have said, should have done, might have done better, could have done worse, who we might have married, who we might have married, what jobs we should have taken, what we might have studied in college, and what we shouldn't have ate.

We also worry about hair we've lost, weight we've gained, problems we've had, conversations never started, diets never followed, and roses we should have stopped and smelled (bad phrase, but you get the idea).

It's a stupid thing to do. We can't change the past, no matter how hard we try. We can't "undo" the decisions we made 20 years ago, and we can't make decisions that we really should have made.

But here we are -- every day, millions of people shortchange their present by worrying about things that took place (or didn't take place) sometime in their past life.

Let's face it -- short a time machine, we will never change our past. Get used to it. Forget about where you were, concentrate on where you are now. You can't drive very far by looking in a rear-view mirror. Sure, we can lie about our past, if we wish, but that's a job best suited for a historian or a politician. Get used to who you are, and make amends with where you came from.

2. Change is inevitable. Adjust.

What's that old adage? "Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine." Things change. We change. Our loved ones change. We may lose hair on the top of our head, and gain hair in our ears. Companies go under, people change jobs, people are born and die. The seasons around us change, and the seasons of our life change as well.

Change is something that we live with every minute of every day, and yet it's one of the hardest things that people deal with. Every new hire and every retirement is a change. The mix in our families changes as people move, become ill, are born, or die. Things change, and we have to change with it. Some years ago, I listened to a set of lectures by Dr. Murray Banks, a psychiatrist who gave speeches and wrote books on the side. One of the things I remember the most about that set of lectures is that much mental illness comes about as the result of people not adjusting well to the world around them.

I know I've mentioned it before, but if you haven't read the short book "Who Moved My Cheese," then consider reading it. It takes just a little time to read, but if you spend some time thinking about it, it can change much of the way you look at life. Essentially, it boils down to this: circumstances change; adjust to the change, don't sit around looking for the good old days to return.

3. We can choose what we think about -- and we should choose to think positively.

Earl Nightingale, who I've mentioned countless times before, called this his "strangest secret:" We become what we think about. If that's true (and it is), then we should choose to think about those areas that make us better -- but many of us concentrate on thinking about things that make us worse. Too many times, we choose to dwell on the bad things in life -- but all that does is make things worse. Dwelling on the best things in life -- the positive things that happen in our life, or our positive prospects for the future -- make us better.

4. Give credit, give love, give guidance, give support, give courtesy.

Many people never learn this lesson: give. Sure, they give at Christmas or birthdays, but they never learn to give the things that really matter.

Give credit where it's due, and recognition to the person who sacrificed to make something good happen.

Give love to those who should feel our love -- our families, our friends, our "loved ones;" -- so many times, people suffer a drought of love in their own lives, and they never realize that in order to gain love, you show love to others.

Give guidance to those who work for us, or to our children, who are trying to learn from us. By giving guidance to others (at least when you're right), you show leadership values, and become a leader.

Give support to all who need it. Around us are people (some of them are friends and loved ones) who need a helping hand, and those who have a hole in their lives. Your support and encouragement will help them to pull their lives back into focus.

Give courtesy to your loved ones. It's strange to say it, but usually we will show a greater courtesy to a common stranger than we will to our closest family members. Look at your own life -- I bet you can see it. It's time to change it.

5. Life is a do-it-yourself proposition.

Sounds funny, doesn't it? But too often, people wait for something or someone else to change their life. We wait for the government, or the school, or our work, our faith, our spouse -- we wait for all of them to make a difference in our life. We wait for the lottery to bring us riches, or we wait for some talking head on TV to tell us what to do.

Life is a do-it-yourself kind of thing. But most of us don't learn that until later in our lives. It's time we learn it when we're young -- "If it's going to be, it's up to me."

6. Persistence pays off.

I've got a quote from Benjamin Franklin on my wall: "Stick to it steadily and you will see great effect." Invest steadily, Save steadily, Exercise regularly. Vacation regularly. Put time and effort into anything and everything, and your efforts will pay off.

7. Learning matters. Learn deeply and keep learning.

Did you ever see the movie "Groundhog Day?" Bill Murray spends the same day over and over and over and over again. Finally, he decides to learn and grow -- and as a result, he becomes a greater person. You might not be living February 2 over and over again, but I bet sometimes it feels like it. But learning should be a never-ending quest for enlightenment. It should be more than merely reading a book or two a year. It should be a planned, developed quest for self-improvement. It should be something we relish doing. Through constant, life-long learning, we can become the renaissance man or woman that we really should be.

So there are 7 things I've learned. It's a short list, and I'll add more to the list in the future -- but it's somewhere to start, and might be something that can make a life's difference to you and your loved ones.

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