

Monday Morning Motivation 5/16/2011



THE POSITIVE PLACE. SALES MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Our own worst enemy

There's an old story told about an accountant who had spent many years at a firm. Each day, he would come into the office, open his desk drawer, look intently in the drawer, and then, after closing the drawer, proceed confidently with his work. He was renowned in the firm -- the junior accountants and the management looked up to him and revered him. Finally, the day came for his retirement. After a wonderful retirement party, the junior accountants rushed to his desk, wondering what immense piece of wisdom had given him such confidence over the years. What could they learn from his example and service? What was the great secret that was contained in the drawer?

They looked in the drawer. They found a small note, which read, "Debits go on the left-hand side."

Accountants, God bless them, have a ledger or balance sheet labeled "debits" and "credits." Debits are amounts that we owe -- credits are payments or amounts that are owed to us.

In their orderly little world, things are divided into one or the other. They are subdivided into various categories that laymen usually have a difficult time understanding, but the "debit and credit" part, minus and plus, are concepts that we can understand.

They then resolve the balance sheet, where eventually the debits and credits work to give managers a true representation of the financial strength of the firm.

People, however, have no such clearly-defined balance sheet, and for many of us, our greatest assets and our greatest detriments are both the same thing -- us.

It's an odd sort of thing, but for many of the people around us -- and possibly us as well -- we are our own worst enemy.

I suppose there's some deep-seated reason why we do it. There's got to be some sort of reason that Freud would find, or pretend to find. But in order to combat the silly problem, the first step is to realize that it's there.

Much of the time, we spend more time working against ourselves than we do working for us.

Most of the time, we don't give ourselves the break we'd give someone else.

Consider the common worst enemy. He wakes up in the morning, eats something he shouldn't eat, doesn't do something that would make him better. He hates his job, seethes at his co-workers, has a negative attitude at work, comes home, and sits on the couch at night.

He could be getting up in the morning, eating healthy, studying before work, doing a job he likes, maintaining a positive attitude, and making himself better in the evening. He could be studying a new trade, mentoring his staff, learning from his friends, loving his wife, and taking care of himself. His self-talk could be positive, not negative, his work could make a difference, his life could be turned around.

He could be his greatest asset -- his best friend.

It's a choice we all make -- we choose to work to make ourselves better, or to make ourselves worse. We can be an asset, or we can be a liability -- a credit or a debit.

What's the key? For the sake of this piece, let's boil it down to three things:

1. **Believe you're as good as anybody else.** My mother-in-law taught me that phrase. She said despite their financial challenges when she and her husband were first married, they "believed they were just as good as anybody else," and deserved happiness. Many of us don't give ourselves that break -- we compare ourselves to others, discount our abilities, and enlarge our weaknesses. By discounting those areas where we are good, and enlarging those areas where we might be weak, our reflection becomes like the reflection in a "funhouse mirror" -- a mirror that so distorts our reflection that it doesn't give us a true judgment of ourselves.

2. **Think of personal growth as a project.** We all know what a project is -- it's something that may be large or small, but is attainable with enough work and effort. Projects have a beginning date and an end date. They may be the result of individual action, or they may involve a team of other people who help. It doesn't matter. Thinking of your growth and development as a project instantly gives you the belief that it's something you can do -- and get done.

3. **Don't go too easy on yourself.** Growth and change takes work -- and while I suggest you ought to give yourself a break in the ultra-criticism department, that doesn't mean we should give ourselves too much of a break. It's a project, so you know it's going to take effort -- but the growth and enjoyment we will gain from the project, and the difference it will make in the long run of our life, means that the project requires that we give it our all. Give yourself the benefit of the doubt, but don't expand that to give yourself a license to just sit around on the couch and eat Cheetos.

So much of it is just developing and maintaining a positive self-image, and fixing those areas in our personalities where the weaknesses might lie. But no matter how your balance sheet may look, you are in control. You are the one who fills out the ledger, and makes certain that your assets are greater than your liabilities.

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