

A few notes relevant to personal growth.

Working Identity

Unconventional strategies for reinventing your career.

By Herminia Ibana

1. Adults are much more likely to act their way into a new way of thinking than to think their way into a new way of acting.
2. I concluded that I might as well change now because I was dying to do something else and it would not get any easier with time.
3. She abandoned the idea of making a big change once and for all, in favor of taking a series of small steps just to see where they might lead.
4. When it comes to reinventing ourselves, the people who know us best are also the more likely to hinder rather than help. They may wish to be supportive but they tend to reinforce or preserve old identities.
5. If I keep saying no, how many more times will I get asked to dance?
6. It is nearly impossible to change careers without altering our social and professional circles.
7. Most people find jobs through personal contacts – most often distant acquaintances with whom you interact only occasionally or rarely. Key for who might prove useful is the likelihood that the person knows different people than we do and therefore bumps into different information.
8. People of all ages are happiest and best able to deploy their talents when they are confident that standing behind them there are one or more trusted persons who will come to their aid should difficulties arise.
9. I heard great regret only from those who failed to act and who were unable or unwilling to put their dreams to the test and to find out for themselves if there were better alternatives.
10. Step out! Be attentive to what each step teaches you and make sure that each step helps you to the next.

Now, Discover Your Strengths

By Marcus Buckingham & Donald O. Clifton

1. The great organization must not only accommodate the fact that each employee is different, it must capitalize on these differences.
2. None of us are blessed with the perfect hand. We simply have to do the best with the cards we are dealt.
3. When the cause of the failure seems to have nothing to do with who we really are, we can accept it.
4. If at first you don't succeed, try again. Then quit. There is no point of making a fool of yourself. / W.C. Fields /
5. In professional golf the difference between excellence and average is very slight. The top players average twenty-seven putts per round. The middling players average thirty-two.
6. In the world of work, the difference between the struggling salesperson and the great one might just be three extra calls made each week or two more emotional signals picked up during a presentation or one more fact tossed in at just the right moment of a conversation.
7. The difference between the exemplary mentor and the run-of-the-mill boss might simply be a few more questions asked and a few more moments spent listening. No matter what your profession, the secret to consistent near perfect performance lies in these kinds of subtle refinements.
8. What is impressive is each person's willingness to admit imperfection. It takes a strong person to ask for help.
9. The all-important ingredient in good management is *Individualization*, and this is what it looks like. All your moves as a manager will need to be tailored to each individual employee. Each employee is wired just a little bit differently.
10. If you want to create higher levels of customer loyalty, play to each person's strength. If you want to retain your most talented employees, play to their strengths.

The Tipping Point
How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference
by Malcolm Gladwell

1. Sprinkled among every walk of life are a handful of people, with a truly extraordinary knack of making friends and acquaintances. They are connectors.
2. 'He simply likes people in a genuine and powerful way, and he finds the patterns of acquaintanceship and interaction in which people arrange themselves to be endlessly fascinating.'
3. Acquaintances represent a source of social power, and the more acquaintances you have the more powerful you are.
4. 'Maven' is someone who wants to solve other people's problems, generally by solving his own and also solving his own problems – his own emotional needs – by solving other people's problems. The fact that Mavens want to help for no other reason than because they like to help, turns out to be an awfully effective way of getting someone's attention.
5. I manage a lot of money. I am one of the top producers in the nation. But I don't tell my clients that. I am not here because of that. I am here to help people. I love helping people. I work because I love helping people. It is called a relationship.
6. Some can build a level of trust and rapport in a few minutes that most people cannot do in half an hour.
7. We normally think of the expressions in our face as the reflection of an inner state. I feel happy so I smile. I feel sad so I frown. Emotion goes inside-out. Emotional contagion, though, suggests that the opposite is also true. If I can make you smile, I can make you happy. If I can make you frown, I can make you sad. Emotion in this sense goes outside-in.
8. Character is more like a bundle of habits and tendencies and interests, loosely bound together and dependent, at certain times, on circumstances and context. The reason most of us seem to have a consistent character is that most of us are really good at controlling our environment.
9. The figure of 150 represents the maximum number of individuals with whom we can have a genuinely social relationship, the kind of relationship that goes with knowing who they are and how they relate to us.
10. Peer pressure is much more powerful than a concept of a boss. The benefit of unity is tremendous – having everyone in a complex enterprise share a common relationship.

Who Moved My Cheese

Dr Spencer Johnson

1. While in the past we may have wanted loyal employees, today we need flexible people who are not possessive about 'the way things are done around here.'
2. They tried to deny what was happening, but found it harder to get to sleep, had less energy the next day, and were becoming irritable.
3. They were beginning to realize the difference between activity and productivity.
4. The longer they stayed in their unfortunate situation, the worse off they would be.
5. Sometimes things change and are never the same again. That's life! Life moves on. And so should we. If you do not change you can become extinct.
6. *What would you do if you were not afraid?* When you move beyond your fear, you feel free.
7. When you are doing something, it is usually less uncomfortable than sitting on the fence.
8. He used to think more about what could go wrong than what could go right.
9. *Learn to laugh at yourself and what you have been doing wrong.*
10. The biggest inhibitor to change lies within yourself, and nothing gets better until you change.

The Experience Economy

by Joseph Pine and James Gilmore

1. Those companies which figure out how to design experiences that are compelling, engaging, memorable - and rich - will be the ones leading the way into the emerging Experience Economy.
2. Ask yourself: What would we do differently if we charged admission? Work is theatre!!!
3. By focusing on costs at the expense of what the client wants companies are commoditizing themselves. Why should a customer pay a higher price for demonstrably poorer service?
4. Goods and services are no longer enough. Customers now want experiences, and they're willing to pay admission for them. Only those who perform their work so as to truly engage their guests will succeed in the new economy.
5. Acting doesn't mean pretending to be someone or something else. Rather, it entails making discoveries within, drawing from a personal reservoir of life experiences and using those experiences to create new and believable character for the role one has accepted, whether in performing arts or in business theatre.
6. Individuals with the greatest reservoirs of life experiences will make the most interesting choices once cast. And finally, when making these casting decisions, consider that, as one director advises, you are casting relationships rather than individual roles. Any new actor, however well qualified for the role, is really suitable only to the extent that his addition enhances the dynamic interplay between all the cast members of the ensemble/organization.
7. Theatre techniques must be ultimately judged by their contribution to our human needs, our aspirations, moral concerns and philosophies.
8. Customise - no individual will entrust himself - or any part of himself - to an enterprise that has not established a one-to-one relationship with him
9. Stage truly engaging experiences. Make it the goal of each individual relationship to hear the customer say that when the two of you work together, he discovers things about himself he didn't know before. Then go further: make it your aspiration to hear him say that only when he interacts with you does he gain the deepest understanding of himself.
10. Help individual customers become all they seek to be. Everything you do affects the character of those for whom the work is done.

True Professionalism

By David H. Meister

1. “You are allowed to fail, but you are not allowed not to try.” Quality effort is an absolute requirement.
2. Believe passionately in what you do, aiming for true excellence and the money will follow. Real professionalism is about attitude and character.
3. You’ll have more fun and success helping other people achieving their goal than you will, trying to reach your own goal.
4. The point of life is to be happy. All other goals (money, fame, status, responsibility, achievement) are merely ways of making you happy.
5. In predicting professional success, enthusiasm and passion (and the hard work they inspire) count for much more than an extra piece of ability.
6. Careers are built by moving from one challenge to the next. Career planning is up to you, not to the firm.
7. There must be consequences for non-compliance to agreed values. Few firms actually have real, operable values. They say they do but few of the professionals really believe they are serious.
8. Individual performance based systems represent, in many cases, a perfect excuse to abdicate responsibility for coaching, counselling and assisting (i.e. an excuse not to manage.)
9. People who know each other well and interact frequently are more willing to do favours for each other than otherwise.
10. Competitive advantage does not come from an ability to hire better people than your competitors do, but from a superior ability to develop them.
11. If I believe you’re interested in me, that you really care, and that you’re truly trying to help me, I will do business with you. The best way to sell is not to sell but to care.
12. The clients need to think “Not only did they get me good results, but it was a pleasure to work with them.

As A Man Thinketh

by James Allen

1. A man is literally what he thinks, his character is the composite sum of all his thoughts. Good thoughts bear good fruit, bad thoughts bad fruit.
2. Circumstances do not make the man; it reveals him to himself.
3. Beautiful thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of grace and kindness, which solidify into genial and sunny circumstances.
4. A man cannot directly choose his circumstances, but he can choose his thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shape his circumstances.
5. At the command of glad and beautiful thoughts the body becomes clothed with youthfulness and beauty.
6. Thoughts of doubt and fear never accomplish anything, and never can. They always lead to failure. Purpose, energy, power to do, and all strong thoughts, cease when doubt and fear creep in.
7. Cherish your visions; cherish your ideals; cherish the music that stirs in your heart, the beauty that forms in your mind, the loveliness that drapes your purest thoughts, for out of them will grow all delightful conditions, all heavenly environments; of these, if you but remain true to them, your world will at last be built.
8. Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become, Your Vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your Ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil.
9. The greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn; the bird waits in the egg. Dreams are the seedlings of realities.
10. Dream of better things, of intelligence, of refinement, of grace and beauty.
11. It is only with the heart that one can see rightly - what is essential is invisible to the eye.

Art of Possibility

By Ros and Ben Zander

1. On the whole resources are likely to come to you in greater abundance when you are generous and inclusive and engage people in the passion for life.
2. Everybody gets an A if they write a letter dated six months out saying what they have actually done to achieve one. Particularly to describe what kind of person they are at the end of the term.
3. It is only when we make mistakes in performance that we can really begin to notice what needs attention.
4. The mentor's disappointment with a student whose style and interest vary from his own is often what is measured in the grade he gives.
5. People who perceive their role in a group to be of little significance (second violinists for example) are particularly vulnerable to feel superfluous.
6. As soon as you start to give people an A all sorts of things are revealed that were as though hidden behind a veil. When the relationship is no longer in question, we can ask ourselves, what now do we want to create?

My comments: I think all these books/ notes illustrate the need to be a bit different, to be human and look after each individual and treat him / her as a unique human being. Having a caring attitude to both customers and colleagues / staff works wonders and trying to ensure that delight and fun is part of our everyday life and all personal encounters breaths both happiness and success. Relationships and networks run the world and it is both satisfying and profitable to build networks as widely as possible by always looking out for opportunities to add value and humour to life. Doing what you love to do is not something available only to the lucky few, but it is a success formula for the many, i.e. we can and should all try to feel and express joy in all your actions.

Frank Olsson 24th June 2008

