

"You need to keep showing up. Most people are going to quit."

» **Kat Sullivan**



Here in the Real World

While spending time with our extended family over the holidays, I kept falling into a researcher mindset.

We had members of The Silent Generation, Baby Boomer, Gen X, Millennial and Gen Z under one roof.

On one evening, cousins were playing with an "Oculus Quest" virtual reality headset. As they flailed and laughed and fought ninjas, or aliens (or whatever they were fighting), there was a wooden antique viewfinder nearby.

I told my nephew that viewfinder was the state of the art in VR gaming when his grandparents were young.

He said, "This?", and studied it like an archaeologist uncovering caveman's tools.

Folks from Gen X regularly suggested that younger family members put away their phones and "speak to people". We frequently had scenes of four or more sitting together, each staring at their phones.

They weren't bored. They were just doing what they do.



A Gratitude Adjustment

In this season of New Year's resolutions, there was a quote I heard a month or so ago that has stayed in my mind.

I don't think it's new...and I'm not sure who originated it...but it struck a nerve.

It went, "People who go around continually complaining about things attract things to complain about. People who go around with a sense of gratitude attract things to be grateful for."

That quote popped into my head recently as a friend told me a story about a project that has given him ongoing heartburn.

During his mini tirade, he said, "And...of course...when it rains, it pours!"

Now, while there were a couple of unusual (or at least unplanned) challenges that he listed, I found that several of the things he lumped into the "pouring" category sounded like normal events.

But he was frustrated. He didn't want to hear me suggest it was unlikely that fate (and his bosses) were conspiring against him.

I flashed back to when I was younger and being told we were spending too much time staring at our (now antique) video games.

I noticed that the people telling younger family members to get off their phones tended to scroll around their own phones regularly. My dad likely spent as much time on his as his grandkids.

That said, no one was a zombie. If someone said something funny or told an interesting story or asked something relevant, even Gen Z's paid attention.

Sure, they may have preferred to reply by texting you an emoji...but they engaged.

Watching this, I was reminded that the days of having captive audiences for marketing messages in our branches, stores, and out in our communities are long over.

Folks are not standing around and looking for things to pay attention to.

We'll get their attention only if we earn it...and keep it only if our messages are relevant to them and their interests.

We will make ourselves known and become relevant by our actions...or we won't.

Our ubiquitous handheld portals-to-the-world are not making things like handshakes, face-to-face engagement, and handing out business cards obsolete.

In fact, I'd argue they have made those activities more differentiating than ever.

In an online world, real-world smiles and conversations stand out like few other things can.

How real will you be with customers this week?

Of course, I still did.

He appeared stuck in a cycle that seemingly everyone (myself included) gets stuck in from time to time. We start complaining about one thing or another and magically begin finding other things to become frustrated with.

Our brains – the super-efficient machines that they are – get better and better at finding things to feed the habit we've chosen to develop.

We may not have intended it, but complaining becomes a habit: An acquired behavior pattern regularly followed until it has become almost involuntary (dictionary.com).

I jokingly reminded him that he had worked hard in his career to rise to the position he is in now, with the authority he has now...and, apparently, pretty darn miserable about it all.

He laughed, called me a bad name, and said, "Okay...good point."

There will almost always be both positive and negative elements that come along with any job, responsibility, project or opportunity that enters our lives.

I'm not suggesting we ignore the negatives. I am suggesting that we do not ignore the positives.

We can choose to look at many of our responsibilities as problems forced upon us...or opportunities we are grateful to have.

The attitude choices we make about these things impact the levels of energy and engagement we bring to the jobs we do and to the people we interact with each day.

Resolve to make gratitude your habit.

"If you want to find happiness, find gratitude."

» Steve Maraboli

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