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**"Don't dream of happiness; deserve it."**

» **Minna T Antrim**



## The Daily Grind

Many of us enjoy conversations about the “big picture” in business.

Those discussions usually touch on things like evolving strategies, advancing technologies, identifying existing and potential competitors, economic trends, future changes in customers' expectations, etc.

Meetings focused on big picture items tend to be inspirational. Big picture thinkers are often fascinating to listen to.

No one truly knows the future, but some folks are good at convincing you that they do – and it is cool stuff to listen to.

I'm not knocking it. We need to regularly think about and talk about big picture topics to give us direction and purpose.

However, most of us can think of leaders we've worked with whose impressive intellects and/or charisma in conversations never seemed to be reflected in their teams' results.

They have solid ideas. They know where they want their operations to go and why they want to go there.

Yet, their teams seldom seem to get there.



## Whataserver

Few things are more impactful in a customer's experience than service providers who find ways to personally connect with them.

This has been more of a challenge than usual over the past year of masks hiding our faces and muffling our voices.

Few would deny that masking and the various distancing protocols we've been forced to implement have made connecting with customers more difficult during this period than in the past.

I've joked with groups that my standard advice of being out in their markets “shaking hands and kissing babies” might be a Class C misdemeanor in some of their states these days.

That said, a young man in a Whataburger fast food restaurant parking lot had me smiling ear-to-ear last week.

The location has two drive-up ordering lanes. The inside lane pulls up to the window.

The outside lane has employees who walk out to take your payment and deliver your food.

My son and I had been at this same location a week prior.

For years, I'd close most of the seminars I had the privilege of giving with a simple request.

I'd ask participants to think of just one simple thing that may have struck a nerve with them or generated an "a-ha" moment and to make that a priority to take action immediately...if not sooner.

I would stress that it had to be a simple thing because they could act on it now.

Maybe it was a phone call they could make on their way home. Maybe it was dropping in on a customer.

Maybe it was texting an employee, or peer, or supervisor. The key was to act – to do something.

Whether the results turn out to be what you expected...or better...or worse...you acted. You moved.

You converted thinking into doing.

Big picture items and large goals are great. However, they require small steps – frequently unglamorous and monotonous ones – to bring them to fruition.

Effective leaders realize this and strive to continuously acknowledge "the grind" and remind their teams of how important even little strides are.

They pay special attention to the day-to-day and week-to-week activities happening in their branches, back offices, call centers, etc.

That doesn't mean micro-managing people as much as micro-acknowledging small efforts and accomplishments.

Whose efforts can you recognize this week?

I imagine we were in the same lane, because the young man (in a mask and cellophane gloves) who walked over said, "Hey...I recognize you guys. Welcome back! Can't stay away, right?"

When he said that, I did remember him from the prior week. I laughed and nodded toward my son saying, "He needs his weekly Whataburger fix before heading back to school."

Swiping my card, the young man said, "That's a smart man! You know we make all our food with love, right? Gotta keep you fine folks coming back! Hope I see y'all next week."

We laughed along with him as he walked away.

I reflected on the fact that a young man standing in a parking lot made us feel like valued customers.

My son observed, "That dude is really good at his job."

I found myself thinking that if that young man was able to make a 20-second interaction handling a basic transaction a memorable experience, what does it say about the levels of engagement we encounter in many places of business?

I've long suggested that many establishments do not deliver bad service so much as they deliver indifferent service.

Customers feel processed, more than served.

We transact, but don't truly interact.

How will you make your customer interactions memorable today?

**"People who pride themselves on their 'complexity' and deride others for being 'simplistic' should realize that the truth is often not very complicated. What gets complex is evading the truth."**

**» Thomas Sowell**

*Dave Martin, author of The In-Store Advantage, has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.*

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