
**"If you believe it will work out, you'll see opportunities.
If you believe it won't, you will see obstacles."
»Wayne Dyer**

The Real Social Network



One of my most-visited topics in speeches over the years has been our human desire for reciprocal relationships.

As we have evolved over time from animal-skin-wearing hunter/gatherer groups to flip-flop-wearing warehouse-store-shoppers, we have formed tribes.

Seeking to associate with people we trust will reciprocate goodwill is a hardwired survival instinct. Positive, reciprocal relationships tend to bring us both physical and emotional security.

One of my pleas to bankers and other service providers has been that they pay attention to how frequently other humans express gratitude for a gesture or comment they make.

If you and your teams hear "Thank you" or "I appreciate that" or "That's really nice" frequently throughout your days, you are likely fostering reciprocal relationships.

A Flock of Eagles



I have frequently joked with other parents that the Boy Scouts have made a liar out of me many times over.

When my boys joined years ago, I said I was too busy. I would donate to whatever cause they needed money for, but there was no way I'd become a "leader".

Well, that turned out to be a lie.

For the most part, I like evenings outdoors when they involve a patio and gas grill. There was no way I would be going on camping trips.

Forty (or so) weekends spent in tents has made that another lie.

After my first son finished his Eagle Scout requirements only weeks before the deadline of his 18th birthday, I said we would not allow my other son to wait that long. And well... you guessed it.

That said, in the midst of a stressful few weeks attempting to meet deadlines,

I couldn't help reflecting on the "survival instinct" theory of reciprocal relationships when I came upon research shared in a recent TED talk by Susan Pinker.

In it, she referenced a long-term research project by Julianne Holt-Lunstad on the factors that lead to longer lifespans.

Things like exercise, being light vs. heavy, and controlling hypertension were factors...but not nearly as important as the top two factors.

The second most important factor to a longer life was having close relationships - people you can rely on during your times of great need.

That seems logical.

The factor most correlated with a long life, however, is social integration.

This refers to how much human interaction we have in our lives. Do we talk to people each day?

Do we personally connect and communicate with folks out there in the world?

Interestingly, Pinker points out that "electronic communications" do not tend to produce the same levels of brain activity or release the beneficial biochemicals in our brains that face-to-face communications produce.

Simply, humans who tend to make eye contact, smile, and interact with other humans during their days are inclined to live longer.

there have been two lessons I hope my son has taken to heart.

The first is that "Plan A's" always look great on paper.

Most folks have good Plan A's. Most successful folks, however, are also adept at Plan B's.

That does not mean their original plans were bad. It simply acknowledges that fate gets a vote.

The second lesson came from a young man we had never met before. He achieved Eagle Scout over a decade ago, well before our time.

During a conversation with my son about his project, we identified how difficult digging the four-foot-deep hole he needed would be. The clay soil surrounding the church where his project was planned is brutal.

As luck would have it, the longest tenured leader in the room remembered a young man they helped years ago who now ran a pig farm an hour away from us. (I kid you not.)

A phone call later, he agreed to meet us the next Saturday with his tractor.

If I would have told you I would never spend three hours sweating in the Houston heat with a pig farmer as we figured out how to dig a 12-inch, 4-foot-deep hole with an 8-inch, 3 1/2-foot-long auger...well, that would have been another lie. We got it done.

As we sincerely thanked him, the young man cheerfully said, "People I didn't even

I've long preached that positive things happen when we find ways to chat and connect with the folks in and around our branches.

It turns out, one of those things might even be better health!

Improve your own days and your customers' days with a few more smiles and "social integration" today.

You'll find it's good for your business health, as well.

know showed up to help me when I needed it years ago. Your son needs to be that guy for someone else in the future."

I've been reinforcing that message to both sons since then.

Every time you go out of your way to help someone you don't know, you increase your circle of friends; and the world is a nicer place when you fill it with friends.

How will you earn new friends today?

"Whatever you hold in your mind on a consistent basis is exactly what you will experience in your life."

»Tony Robbins



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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