
"Only those who have patience to do simple things perfectly ever acquire the skill to do difficult things easily." » James J Corbett

Newsworthy Resilience

Even though I know our phones are constantly monitoring us, it still startles me a little when an especially targeted ad or "suggested for you" post appears on my social media pages.

I got one following a recent lively conversation with a friend about how Huey Lewis and the News's music still holds up today.

(Yes, my friends and I discuss only the most important subject matter.)

Eavesdropping concerns aside, the post that popped up made me smile. It touched on a topic I've written and spoken about for years: perseverance.

The post featured part of an interview with Huey. He shared that after their first album was released, the band was excited for the opportunity to go on tour opening for the Doobie Brothers.

Well, suffice it to say that the average Doobie Brothers fan back then was not in the mood for a new band or their new album.

Huey said they were booed loudly after their first song and then the next... and then the next.

They soon learned to launch into songs immediately to take away the crowd's chance to boo.

They blew through their 10-song set and slinked off the stage. Huey apologized and expected to be dumped from the tour.

One of the Doobie Brothers said, "Are you kidding? You did a lot better than the last opening act. They didn't even finish their first set."

What are Words For?

While taking advantage of the breakfast buffet at my hotel in downtown Austin recently, I had trouble wiping the smile off my face.

If I were to ask you to close your eyes and imagine what the lobby of an Austin hotel would look like in the morning, you'd probably be right.

There were as many laptop computers on the tables as there were bowls of steel-cut oats and plates of free range scrambled eggs.

Looking around, if you had told me they were filming a Patagonia commercial, I would have believed you.

But I enjoyed it.

I couldn't hear what everyone around the dining area was saying, but most sure seemed to mean it.

If you watch folks talking from a distance, it's fun to gauge their level of passion for what they're saying by their body language.

It appeared that lots of folks in that lobby had lots of important things to get off their chests.

I found one of the few open spots in the dining area to sit and have breakfast.

I forgot my earbuds in the room, so I was treated to hearing the six people at the adjacent table practicing a presentation they were making that morning.

While I'm sure these were all smart people, I fought off the urge to interrupt them. If this were a Saturday Night Live skit lampooning "consultant speak", it could not have been funnier.

Encouraged by the humor and vote of confidence, the band finished the tour's 30 additional dates.

Of course, they faced boos every single night as well as regularly had objects thrown at them.

But those struggles were instrumental in refining their performances, pulling the band together (if for nothing else than gaining cover), and shaping them into what became one of the highest selling bands and biggest touring acts of the decade.

What I find particularly compelling about this story is the supportive mentoring role played by the more experienced members of the Doobie Brothers.

While they probably weren't thrilled for each concert to kick off with boos, they related to the struggle.

They had been in their shoes before and offered support and encouragement to the rookies when it was most needed.

Sure, most of us do not hear boos or have things thrown at us while we master our trades. (Most of us.)

But whether you're the newbie or the supportive mentor, know that great things can happen if you just keep on playing.

At one point, I considered that of the last 2 minutes of words I heard, there was only about 15 seconds of actual information in them.

While I wasn't quite sure about the product or services they were offering, they definitely wanted whomever they were meeting with to know all about their culture and their mission.

I'll admit I couldn't see their slides and didn't know who they were going to be presenting to, but I couldn't fathom what their points were.

A favorite Albert Einstein quote began running through my mind: "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough."

Remember when presenting information to employees, supervisors, customers, prospects...whomever... that being clear and understandable is more important than trying to sound authoritative or erudite.

(Like using the word "erudite" when "smart" works fine.)

Folks tend not to be impressed by catchphrases and unnecessarily superfluous words. (Like that.)

Know what you want to communicate well enough to do it plainly.

Clear and succinct messages speak loudest of all.

"The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak." » Han Hofmann

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