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**"When someone does something good, applaud! You will make two people happy." > Samuel Goldwyn**

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## A Complimentary Style

I often joke with groups that the fastest way to make a room full of people groan in unison is to say, "Okay, now we're going to break out and do some role-playing exercises."

As chuckles follow, I state that while that's truer than not, there actually is one practice that I do strongly advocate role-playing as frequently as possible: paying compliments.

Becoming a person who is comfortable and competent with the practice of paying compliments can be downright transformational.

I suggest that when it comes to everything from sales and service to management to personal relationships to coaching, it's almost a superpower.

Those thoughts came to mind again when I found a series of short videos by a gentleman named Troy Hawke.

He's a British comedian who regularly dresses up in (what I believe to be) a smoking jacket and ascot and takes to the streets.

He pays smile-inducing compliments to folks he encounters. Sometimes, he stands in one spot and distributes compliments as folks walk by.

Other times, he walks about and surprises folks with a compliment. He is remarkably creative and impressively articulate. It's hard to watch

## The Keys to Success

My wife and I recently took our 30th wedding anniversary trip to Key West.

We honeymooned there all those many moons ago and were back on our 10-year and 20-year anniversaries, as well. It remains one of our favorite U.S. cities.

On a small sunset cruise one evening, we sat near a lovely couple also celebrating a 30-year milestone: her 30th birthday.

We laughed at the coincidence, and my wife and I shared stories about what Key West was like back in "our day."

I pointed out things that have seemingly not changed one iota in three decades.

Heck, I don't think they've wiped a counter or mopped a floor in Capt. Tony's since 1993. (If you know, you know.)

It was during our chat that I began reflecting on the fact that our favorite experiences in one of the more unique cities in America almost always involved interacting with great people.

The most memorable experiences were not about simply visiting iconic spots or establishments.

They were the stories we were told, conversations we had, and friendly gestures from the people of various establishments.

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his encounters without smiling ear-to-ear.

Even watching other people getting nice compliments tends to make us feel better.

His compliments are sometimes witty, but always spot on and personalized.

The reactions from many of the folks he compliments are telling. Folks light up and their smiles are clearly genuine.

In one video, he talks about how great the compliment giver feels after paying someone else a compliment.

Now, it's possible that this particular routine was originally intended to be more comical than inspirational. He is a comedian, after all.

But it's clear from the viral nature of his compliment clips that he has tapped into a very human trait.

We are innately drawn to people who make others feel good about themselves.

And like any trait worth having, you become better at it as you consciously, consistently work on it.

The upside of pursuing this particular trait is that the rewards and positive feedback start immediately.

In a world where many people feel unappreciated, offering a sincere compliment can not only transform someone's day... but also improve their entire outlook.

It will almost always improve yours, as well.

We still remember three hotel waiters we met on our honeymoon who took it upon themselves to become the personal concierges of two newlywed Cajuns.

They felt like old friends by the time we left and are as much a memory of that trip as any of the places we visited.

It was during another outing on our recent trip that I was reminded of how it's a company's people who make or break the customer experience.

On a 2 ½ hour boat ride (one way) to the Dry Tortugas, the 175 or so customers experienced 5-foot seas.

Without delving into specifics, suffice it to say that a boat filled with non-sailors in rough waters creates unpleasant situations.

Yet, the small crew of that vessel managed to maintain not only their own spirits but also those of others, while cheerfully performing 'other duties as assigned'—that I'm betting were not listed in the employment ad.

If people who have experienced seasickness are talking more about how friendly, helpful, and informative the crew was than anything else, you've reached Jedi level in customer care and experience.

Some argue that better companies naturally attract the best people, while others believe that it's great people who build better companies.

I'd argue that both are right.

What are you building on today?

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**"I can live for two months on a good compliment." » Mark Twain**

*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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