



IMPROVING YOUR DAY



MUSINGS



THE HUMAN CONDITION



ORTIYKMWOYBNT-O

Balancing Act: The Newsletter (No. 224, April 2018)

BALANCING ACT: BLENDING LIFE, WORK, AND RELATIONSHIPS®

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See Writing on the Wall, featuring Koufax the Wonder Dog.



IMPROVING YOUR DAY

- Begin with something you like: music, comedy, family discussion.
- Stay in the current moment, don't think about unpleasant business to come later.
- Make sure the area where you spend morning time (or most of your time) is filled with things you enjoy: photos, awards, mementos, books, etc.
- Create a routine that you can maintain even when traveling: workout, watch certain programs, writing, meditating, etc.
- Manage your food consumption. If you want a burger and fries at night, have a light lunch. If you plan on a major luncheon engagement, plan a light dinner.
- Always have times to talk with your spouse, partner, kids, extended family. (My wife and I "debrief" over dinner, sometimes for ten minutes, sometimes for the entire dinner.)
- Don't just dream about future vacation and travel plans, begin to assign dates and make arrangements.
- If you're working past 5 pm (or over 40 hours a week) there is either something wrong with your job or with you.
- Never assume being a "workaholic" is fine because you're happy and healthy. It has a very negative affect on those around you.
- Start your day reminding yourself of three recent successes, personal and/or professional, and end your day thinking of three things that went quite well during the day.



If you ask for money, you're like to get advice. But if you ask for advice, you're likely to get money.

Alan Weiss

MUSINGS

There was a psychological marketing study done years ago where 100 customers of Dunkin' Donuts had their coffee paid for if they would patronize Starbucks for a solid month, while 100 Starbucks people had their coffee paid over at Dunkin' Donuts. The point of the experiment was to see how many people from each group would join the other tribe permanently after the month was over and they were paying for their own coffee again.

Not one person deserted to the other side on either side.

The Starbucks people found Dunkin' Donuts somewhat plebian, with plain countertops, utilitarian fixtures, no WiFi, and too much noise. The Dunkin' Donuts people reported being terribly uncomfortable in a Starbucks environment in which they felt like they were intruding in someone else's living room. They felt the surroundings were too quiet, too solemn, too precious. They didn't find all of the confusing choices and language ("vente") appealing.

My colleague, Seth Godin, whose work I greatly respect, often speaks of "tribes" (whereas I speak of "communities"). I find tribes to be exclusionary, and communities to be inclusive. In this experiment, we can see two separate

tribes, with their respective beliefs, totems, and customs. And the lesson here is this: *If you want to expand your market and grow, don't assume you can simply steal customers from competitors.*

If you're selling wrenches, people may just want the cheapest, but they may also ask for a brand (e.g., Craftsman). But to what degree are Apple customers likely to switch to Samsung? Brand loyalty and brand experiences usually trump price differences and other incentives.

My message to you here is this: We can all attempt to influence, cajole, and persuade. And there is no zealot like the converted (just ask St. Paul). But you

are unlikely to win any arguments or persuade many people who have joined a political or social “tribe.” There are still people who believe in the Loch Ness Monster, even though the most explicable photo was exposed as a hoax on the perpetrator’s death bed. That tribe will not disband, no matter what the evidence is to the contrary.

Choose your fights. Some people are willing to be convinced. But, many won’t abandon their tribal beliefs. Of course, in blind taste tests, no one can really differentiate between most coffees or most wines, or regular chicken and “free range” chicken, despite the prices. But that’s another story...

THE HUMAN CONDITION: RESILIENCE

Steven Hawking recently passed away at 76, having been diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig’s Disease) at 21 and told he had two years to live. I actually read his book, *A Brief History of Time*, and probably understood about 25% of it.

There are people in my global communities who are dealing with grave illnesses, horrible losses, and painful decisions. I’ve known people who were bankrupt and who are quite successful today.

I find it highly useful to consider my ills and grief and disappointments in light of what others are going through. When my twin granddaughters were born prematurely, just two weeks on the side of viable, I received letters and support from all over the world from parents and grandparents whose children survived such a birth.

Richard Citrin and I wrote a book called *The Resilience Advantage*. You’d have to agree, I think, that Stephen Hawking was somewhat resilient! But so are people all around you who choose to overcome, bounce back, and persevere instead of becoming a perpetual “victim” or bemoaning their fate.

We can simply “claim” or adopt resilience. We don’t need training programs or therapy, though they can help. It’s important to have a support structure and friendly ears. But, basically, we simply need to admit that “this, too, shall pass.” That applies to grievous loss, and most certainly to events like fender-benders, lost jewelry, a missed plane connection, and spilled wine.

Hawking didn’t see any limitation to creating great work. He was in pain at times, but that didn’t matter. We’re all in pain at times, some minor, some severe, some brief, some long-term. We can’t escape the pain.

But suffering is voluntary.

ONLY READ THIS IF YOU KNOW THE WELL OR YOU’LL BE NEEDLESSLY TICHED OFF

I was rehearsing a keynote I was to give to the employees of the Golden Nugget Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey many years ago. As I wandered the stage and the crew checked lighting and sound, I said into my live mike, “Why on Earth are there monitors flush with the stage? Whose design is this? If I’m not careful, I could put my foot right through one of the screens.”

A disembodied voice from the booth called out, “Those are for Mr. Sinatra, who’s singing here tonight. His lyrics scroll on the screens so he doesn’t forget

them.”

“Hell of a great idea!” I quickly yelled.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Super Global Best Practices

I've gathered the best practices of entrepreneurs, boutique firm owners, solo practitioners, academicians, and authors to create a vibrant day of improved performance that will immediately increase your business results and decrease your labor intensity. I'm guessing people will be rushing out during breaks to change proposals, alter online work, and create new initiatives. *London prices go up later this month, register now.*

Sign up here: [Super Global Best Practices](#)

Self-Esteem Growth

I've been asked to conduct this for a fourth time, this one in Washington, DC (perhaps there will be cherry blossoms). This isn't remedial, but rather a limited-attendance, intense examination of how to improve confidence and self-worth continually, to fully realize your potential.

Sign up here: [Self-Esteem Growth](#)

The Threescore and More Teleconference

Based on my newest book due out in April, if you are over 50 or plan to be over 50, you need these techniques. We too often surrender control as we mature, rather than seize it and increase it. I'm 71 and on top of my game. Wouldn't you like to be, as well? (Buy the book and receive free admission, see below.)

Sign up here: [The Threescore and More Teleconference](#)

The Teleconference on Religion

No conversions expected, this is a friendly discourse on the origins, nature, and influence (or non-influence) of religion in today's world. I'll share some of my personal journey, and prompt you to consider some issues no matter what your beliefs. All proceeds will go to a local homeless shelter.

Sign up here: [The Teleconference on Religion](#)

Threescore and More, The Book

You can purchase this pre-publication, and gain bonuses ranging from free admission to the teleconference above to personal coaching, and even a free workshop seat in May. Bonuses expire April 9th!

Preorder here: [Threescore and More](#)

And one other thing:

The Million Dollar Consulting® Convention

In Boston in April this year, with luminaries such as Suzanne Bates, Chip Bell, and Dorie Clark on the main stage, as well as 12 great concurrent sessions, networking reception—and me! We already have 125 people from all over the world, register while we still have room.

Sign up here: [The Million Dollar Consulting® Convention](#)

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Balancing Act® is a monthly electronic newsletter discussing the blending of life, work, and relationships, based on the popular Balancing Act workshops and writing of Alan Weiss, Ph.D. Contact us for further information at: balancingact@summitconsulting.com.

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