

Boom town playpen fails



Every morning, be thankful for the challenges you face!

Mice have problems too, you know. Traps. Cramped quarters. Noisy giants for neighbors. A lot like us, really.

So the National Institute of Mental Health decided to see what would happen if mice were set loose in a problem-free world. They thought the results might reveal something about human beings and their problems.

Eight fortunate little mice were given free run of a rodent paradise—they were given enough food and space for 4,000 mice.

As expected, the eight soon became sixteen; the sixteen, thirty-two; and so forth. They played, slept, ate, and doubled their population every 55 days. It was a “boom town playpen”—the kind many humans wish they could live in.

But as the population hit 620, the frolicking slowed. Social problems appeared. At population 2,200, just above half capacity, the boom town fizzled. Reproduction halted. Eventually the population plummeted to zero.

Silence. The mice were gone.

The parallel between mice and human beings is obvious: *challenge is an essential ingredient of life.*

Without a challenge, people become “settled.” And when people are settled too long they get lazy, nervous and querulous. They find that what they *have* is not really what they wanted; that the challenge, the journey itself was the real reward. Even though we strive to become settled, and seek the mirage of false, material, external security, we know that we really do our best, accomplish most, and live most fully when we are *unsettled*. The security that resides within us and is available to us in abundance includes the ability to think, to love, to be creative and productive.

Here’s what you can do: *Every morning, be thankful for the challenges you face! They will bring out the best in you. Live on the edge. Continually strive toward your goals, and don’t let your life become too settled.*



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Say “I do” to growth and improvement

You and your spouse deserve results, not just promises

In the traditional wedding ceremony, your spouse agrees to accept you “for better or worse ...till death do you part,” and at first that sounds quite noble. But is it? It actually might absolve you of any responsibility to grow and improve. If you don’t improve, neither will your marriage, and the result could be two people who have parted ways emotionally, if not physically, long before death.

Your relationship with your spouse is far too precious to be founded on such a vague promise as “for better or worse.” By asking your spouse to accept you on these terms, you are in essence saying, “Stay with me even if I get complacent, lazy, dull and unattractive.” What motive does that give you *not* to become complacent, lazy, dull, and unattractive? None at all. And if you backslide, what of the marriage? After much chafing, all that remains to hold it together is a twisted, frayed thread.

But any good marriage should be held together by the warm, powerful, attraction that binds a man and a woman who are growing and improving as individuals. To maintain that enthusiasm, which most couples at least shared in the beginning, both of you must continue to *grow and improve*, and that’s the commitment you should make to one another. Don’t stay together for better or worse; just stay as long as you both keep improving. That way your marriage will keep improving too, because you’ve founded the relationship on results instead of mere promises.

Saying “I do” to growth and improvement is a far deeper and more rewarding commitment than the traditional promise of “for better or worse,” simply because it requires both husband and wife to accept responsibility for their part of the relationship. Besides, it just makes sense.

Consider your other relationships. In any of them did you or someone else agree to accept the

worse? Of course not. Take your job for instance. Your employer didn’t say, “This is your job forever, whether you help our company get better or worse.” If he or she did say that, then you could come in late every morning, fall asleep at your desk, take three-hour lunch breaks, and leave early every afternoon, with no fear of being fired! What your employer should say is, “This is your job as long as you deserve it, and you’ll deserve it as long as you keep improving.” And in turn, your commitment to your employer should be that you’ll keep working for the company as long as it keeps improving.

And so it is with two people in love who decide to get married. They might say to each other, “Because I love you, I want the best for you. And I want that best to be *me*. So stay with me as long as I *am* the best for you—as long as I keep improving. That way I’ll *have* to improve, and you’ll *want* to stay.”

Here’s what you can do: *If you’re still single, consider including in your wedding vows a commitment to grow and improve. And if you’re already married, it’s still not too late; each of you can accept responsibility for your part of the relationship beginning NOW, in all areas of your life. Ask yourself these questions:*

Do you have a plan for staying in great shape by maintaining an exercise program and by watching what you eat? Are you in better shape now than last year?

Do you learn new things each year by reading more, listening to motivational/inspirational CDs, attending seminars? Are you expanding your mental capacities? Do you feel smarter this year than last year?

Do you work at increasing your self-confidence, poise, and ability to communicate with others as each year goes by?

Say “I do” and make the commitment!



On winning

Form the habit of doing things failures don't like to do

You have at some time probably asked yourself, "How can I become more successful?" So did Albert E. N. Grey, and he pursued the answer until he found it. He then incorporated that answer into a speech titled "The Common Denominator of Success."

"Several years ago I was brought face to face with the disturbing realization that I was trying to supervise and direct the efforts of a large number of people who were trying to achieve success, without knowing myself what the secret of success really was," Grey explained.

"So I set out on a voyage of discovery which carried me through biographies and all sorts of dissertations on success, until I finally realized that the secret I was trying to discover lay not only in what people did, but also in what made them do it.

The common denominator of success, the secret of success of every person who has ever been successful, lies in the fact that he or she formed the habit of doing the very things that failures don't like to do.

"The things that failures don't like to do are the very things that you and I and other human beings, including successful people, naturally don't like to do. Success is something which is achieved by the minority of persons, and is therefore unnatural and not to be

achieved by following our natural likes and dislikes.

"But if they don't like to do these things, why do they do them? Because by doing the things they don't like to do, they can accomplish the things they want to accomplish. Successful people are influenced by the desire for pleasing results. Failures are influenced by the desire for pleasing methods and are inclined to be satisfied with such results as can be obtained by doing things they like to do.

"Successful people form the habit of striving toward pleasing *results*, because they are powered by a strong purpose - a definite, practical, but emotional purpose. But I have a family to support you may say. Isn't that enough of a purpose? No, it isn't, for the very simple reason that it is easier to adjust ourselves to the hardships of a poor living than it is to adjust ourselves to the hardships of making a better one. Which seems to prove that the strength which holds you to your purpose is not your own strength, but the strength of the purpose itself."

There you go. Habit. Results. Purpose. Wise advice from a man who continued to dig until he found the answer.

Here's what you can do: *Form the habit of asking yourself on a regular basis, "Self, is what I'm doing now just a pleasing activity, or is it an activity that will bring me pleasing results?"*

Be thankful

Be THANKFUL for the troubles of your job

They provide about half your income. If it were not for the things that go wrong, the difficult people you have to deal with, and the problems and unpleasantnesses of your working day, someone could be found to handle your job for half of what you are being paid.

It takes intelligence, resourcefulness, patience, tact and courage to meet the troubles of any job. That is why you hold your present

job. And it may be the reason you aren't holding down an even bigger one.

If all of us would start to look for more "troubles," and learn to handle them cheerfully and with good judgment—as opportunities rather than irritations—we would find ourselves getting ahead at a surprising rate. For it is a fact that there are plenty of big jobs waiting for men and women who aren't afraid of the trouble connected with them!

Life is a mirror

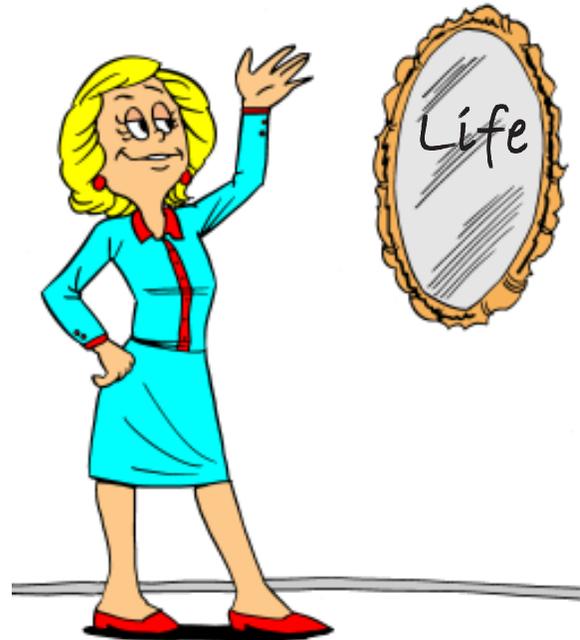
See your reflection in the faces of others

"This woman was a real grouch," a female business executive explained. "I mean, she looked like she had been weaned on a pickle.

"Well, we talked a bit when we met, but just idle chitchat. Neither of us was interested in the other until one afternoon when I happened to see her do something very kind and generous. It floored me, and my opinion of her changed immediately.

"Later, when we bumped into each other again, I smiled at her and she smiled too. We started talking and discovered we had several things in common, including tennis. So we arranged a time to play, and we both enjoyed it a lot. We played three sets, and afterward, as we were walking to our cars, she said, 'Wow, I can't believe how you've changed. You must not have been acting like yourself until these last few days, because before then I thought you were a real grouch!'"

Here's what you can do: Remember that what you see in others may be a reflection of what you are projecting to them. Want to surround yourself with pleasant, enjoyable people? Then be that way



yourself. And whenever you're not sure what attitude you're projecting, just look for your reflection in the faces of others, because life is a mirror!

Stay young!

The secret to staying young is inside your head

Youth is not a time of life, it is a state of mind. It is the appetite for *adventure* over the enjoyment of complacency.

No one grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old by deserting their *ideals*. Years may wrinkle the skin, but giving up *enthusiasm* wrinkles the soul.

Ignorance, doubt, fear and despair, these are the long, long years that bow the head, shorten the stride, and turn the spirit to dust.

You are as young as your *self-confidence*, as old as your doubts. You are as young as your *faith*, as old as your fears.

Whether seventeen or seventy, a person is young if he or she enjoys gaining *knowledge*, and welcomes the *challenges* presented by the sweet game of life.

So long as our hearts receive the message of *truth, beauty, cheer, and courage*, so long as we relish working and playing with others, *we are young!*



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