

Passion!

I've talked about passion until I was blue in the face for 25 or 30 years. I was in Switzerland, Interlaken, a couple of years ago. And I gave a speech, and I was interviewed by a member of the press—and yes go on with your Swiss jokes—but at any rate, she said to me—she was a young woman—and she said, “Why do you go on about all these things like passion?”

And I said, “Okay.” I said, “I’m not sure I know how to explain something like that, but let’s try it this way.” I said, “Let’s put 15 years onto your life. Let’s subtract 15 years from my life. You and I have had a dream. And that dream was to create a restaurant. Well, we have decided to take the plunge. Each of us somehow or other has managed to accumulate 100,000 dollars in our bank account. And we are going to *do* a restaurant. We’re able to find a reasonable piece of property to build it on. We’re actually able to find ourselves a great chef. And now the time comes to hire the waiters, the waitresses, the bus boys, the dishes people, and so on. And this afternoon we’re hiring a waiter. And we interview two people. And one of the people comes in, and he’s worked in a restaurant for 14 years, and he knows a fork from a knife. There is no issue about that. The other one is a woman who has not, maybe even *been* to a restaurant. But here’s the deal. He comes up with an absolute recitation about how he understands the restaurant business; she comes in—you’ve seen it, I’ve seen it—she lights up the room. Now here’s the deal. You and I are betting the table, we’re betting the money that we have accumulated with incredibly hard work over a 15 year period, and we’ve got to make a choice. Who do we hire? Mr. I Understand Knives and Forks, or Ms. I Light Up the Room. And this is not a sexist thing. He can light up the room, and she could be the person who knows the difference between knives and forks. And to me it’s as obvious as the end of your nose. Whether it’s a waiter or a waitress, it is a person with energy, passion, enthusiasm. And now I want you to understand it’s the same thing in a finance department. Because the definition of a finance department that works is when the people

in the finance department are *helping* the people that they serve, in fact, become better businesswomen or businessmen.”

What kind of a world— The soft stuff. Waterman and I said it—Bob Waterman and I said it—in *In Search of Excellence* 26 years ago. We said, “Hard is soft; soft is hard.” The real *soft* stuff is the numbers in the plan. The real *hard* stuff, passion, energy, values, character, enthusiasm.