

# Tom Peters' 100 Ways To Succeed/Make Money



## TIPS #1-25



Compiled from the home page blog at [www.tompeters.com](http://www.tompeters.com), these 25 tips for success  
are the first of 100 ideas to be posted by Tom over a 25-week period.

## #1

### The Clean & Neat Team! (Team Tidy?)

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I've been preaching the "Experience Thing" for a few years. ("Not just a 'Product' or a 'Service,' but an 'Awesome Experience.')" I believe my act. **But ...**

I was in a giant retail mall last Saturday. Visited a renowned retailer's space. "Experience Marketing"? No one does it better. **But ...**

THE PLACE WAS A MESS.

Got me thinking. I "go off on" various tacks, like the Experience bit. But let's not forget the Boring Basics along the way! Such as: Clean-Neat Rules! (Or, at least, Messy-Sloppy-Dirty is a Top 5 Turnoff.)

I'm not a "neat freak." To the contrary, I'm a slob. But that's home. Not my profession. I select hotels in large measure based on whether or not they have 1-hour, 24-hours-per-day pressing services. I get paid (very) well for what I do. I don't get paid to show up for a speech looking like I slept in my clothes!

The retail space in question was crowded with customers and visitors. (Good for them.) But it'd gotten very messy in the course of the day. Goods scattered, or at least untidy stacks of goods. Trash on the floor. Boxes stacked unattractively near the checkout desk. Etc. (Etc.) To me the space ... SCREAMED ... "We Don't Give a S\_\_\_\_" (I started to use "We don't care." Or: "We don't give a hoot." But that's not it. It is: "WE DON'T GIVE A SHIT.")

There's a lot to Great Retailing, or great whatever. But right near the head of the line is: "WE CARE!" And near the head of the "We care" line is "Looks like a million dollars."

Hence ... THERE IS NO EXCUSE WHATSOEVER FOR SLOPPINESS, UNTIDINESS, LESS THAN S-PA-R-K-L-I-N-G RESTROOMS, ETC., ETC.

MoneyMaker Message #1: KEEP IT CLEAN! Kudos to ... TEAM TIDY. Brickbats to ... the Dirty Dozen.

## #2

### Pronoun Power

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Was editing a trainer's manual, replete with suggested dialogue, for a friend today. Good stuff! (Content: A+) But one "small" thing caught my attention. Most of the scripts for trainers addressing their charges read like this: "I [Trainer] suggest that you [Client/Student] approach the Objection as follows ..." What's my problem? Simple. I/trainer am the Subject, the teller of truth. And the Student/Client is the Object, the recipient of my pearls of wisdom.

NO! NO! NO!

Here's the Big Word I want us to obsess on in today's Tip: **WE!** (And: **US!**)

Here, for example, is my re-write of the above script: "**We** often hear the following Objection blah blah blah. What if it weren't an objection at all? What if it provides **us** with an Opportunity to get **our** oar in about this blah blah blah [product benefit, say]. ..." Note, obviously, in my rewrite the three uses of "we" and "us." From long experience, I suggest that this changes the Fundamental Nature of Community-Interaction between the Instructor and the Student. Instead of being an imparter-of-knowledge to the Unwashed, I/trainer am now a fellow-toiler-in-the-trenches hunting for a fruitful solution to "our" shared dilemma. Right?

Student and teacher are now—via Pronoun Power!—engaged in a Joint Venture toward Excellence. (Or some such.)

This trick (more on who gets “tricked” in a moment) was taught me by my first McKinsey partner-mentor back in 1974. “Tom,” he said, none too gently, “when you address the Client, never fail to use the word ‘We.’ As in ‘The way **we** might get at this blah blah blah.’ The idea is it’s us and the Client foraging mightily as a Team in hot pursuit of the truth.”

I’ll be the first to admit that this is indeed a “trick.” But beginning in those McKinsey days, I contend that it was me who was mostly tricked! Use “we” and “us” enough ... and I began to feel I was on the Client’s Team, not vice versa.

To this day, 30 years later, by instinct, I religiously use “We” and “Us”—and a team of wild horses could not elicit an “I” or “You.”

It is a trick ... and it is a Fundamental Value concerning Groups on Joint Ventures in Quest of Better Understanding.

**We** agree, right?

NB #1: Also observe, Trick #2, the “religious” capitalization of Client. Another McKinsey fruit that makes a big difference to me.

NB #2: Back to yesterday’s Tip on cleanliness. I mentioned in passing, regarding Team Tidy, “sparkling restrooms.” I simply want to underscore the idea ... worthy of status as 1 of my 100, in fact. There’s no greater giveaway to the I CARE (or don’t) query than the status of the Restroom. Movie theater, Gas Station, McDonald’s, \$75-an-entrée restaurant ... check out the Restroom. “Messy” gets a C-. “Dirty” gets a D. “Foul” gets an F. (I’d guess 70% of Restrooms get a D or F in my experience.) Give a B- to a “clean” Restroom. And a B+ to a “squeaky clean” Restroom. And reserve the rare A/A+ for the squeaky clean Restroom that becomes “an experience” in and of itself. Great furnishings! Flowers! A (Great) chair in which to take a 30-second respite! Etc.

## #3

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### The Rarest of Gifts

The rarest of gifts: THANK YOU!

Alas, it (a nod of appreciation, a hastily penned, 2-line T-note) it is so rare. (And thence ... ever so powerful!)

Among TP’s favorite quotes: *“The two most powerful things in existence: a kind word and a thoughtful gesture.”*—Ken Langone, VC and Home Depot founder. *“The deepest human need is the need to be appreciated.”*—psychologist William James. *“We look for listening, caring, smiling, saying ‘Thank you,’ being warm.”*—Colleen Barrett, president, Southwest Airlines, on hiring criteria.

Think: THANK YOU POWER! (And “power” it is!)

Hints: (1) Make it “permanent”—send a note. (2) HANDWRITTEN notes beat emails!!!!!! (3) This applies equally at age 18 in a “powerless” job, as well as at age 48 as Honcho. (4) Do this especially when you “don’t have time”—at the end of a stressful day. (5) Make it a “formal” habit—do it at the end of the day, say, every 2 or 3 days. (6) If you can’t think of anything or anyone to say “Thank you” to—I suggest you go see a shrink.

(Remember: *“Performance” stems from Engagement ... Encouragement ... Passion ... Appreciation ... Public recognition ... Respect.* “Thanking” is a big part of that.)

Uh, Thank You for taking the time to read this!

## #4

### Make the Call! Today! Now!

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Only a sad few seek out contention. Then there's another group (I'm a Charter Member) that goes to almost any length to avoid it ... and routinely lets little, salvageable messes fester into big, intractable ones.

Answer: MAKE THE CALL! TODAY! NOW!

*In short, a 5-minute call made right now to deal with a "slightly bruised" ego or a "minor" misunderstanding can avoid a situation tomorrow that leads to divorce court, a lost (major) client, an employee law suit, etc.*

I've learned that invariably "there was a moment" when the situation (DAMN NEAR ANY "SITUATION") was reversible. In fact, easily reversible. But pride or embarrassment or unwillingness to further mess up an already nasty day led to "just one more day's" evasion & delay ... and that day becomes a second day ...

No, I've not joined a Busted Relationships 12-step Program. But I have done one, for me, little Big Thing. As part of my morning priority-setting meditation I go to an item on my desktop labeled "NOT TOMORROW!" It's simply a list of names, or perhaps situations, that I must remain conscious of ... and work on in the course of the day. I try and confront myself brutally about what I'm putting off. AND ADD TO MY LIST ONE (no more than one ... do-ability is paramount) UNPLEASANT CALL I MUST MAKE TODAY. We're all different, but I've found that just having the damned "NOT TOMORROW!" de facto flashing at me is a spur to action. (Incidentally, it's right next to another doc/icon labeled "VITAL SIGNS"—that's the one, a PP slide, with red on black, that heralds the results of my most recent weigh-in and the number of consecutive days I've exercised.)

By the way (we all know this, too), don't let me make this sound so grim. I find that in 9 of 10 cases the call goes far better than imagined (maybe it's just relief?); not only does it "deal with" a thorny problem, but it also often launches a positive trajectory for a fraying relationship; and it always makes me feel better about myself, makes me feel a bit of a hero, actually.

MAKE THE CALL. TODAY. NOW.

## #5

### Target #1: Me!

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Stand in front of the mirror ... Smiling. Saying ... "Thank you." Doing ... Jumping Jacks. Whatever. (See below.)

Fact: "It" begets "it."

Fact: "Not it" begets "It-less-ness."

Smiling begets a warmer (work, home) environment.

Thanking begets an environment of mutual appreciation.

Enthusiasm (those Jumping Jacks) begets enthusiasm.

Love begets love.

Energy begets energy.

Wow begets Wow.

Optimism begets Optimism. (I've been devouring Martin Seligman lately.)

Honesty begets honesty.

Caring begets caring.  
Listening begets engagement.  
Etc.  
Etc.

How do you “motivate others”? Take a B-school course on Leadership?  
No! (You were joking, right?)  
Answer: Motivate yourself first.  
By hook or by crook.

Call it: Leadership By Unilateral Attitude Adjustment.

Are there things that can be labeled “circumstances”?  
Of course.  
Do bad things happen to good people?  
Doubtless.

Is there such a thing as “powerlessness”?  
No!  
No!  
No!

Take charge now!  
Task one: Work on ourselves.  
Relentlessly!

If you can figure out how to go to work with a smile today, I (trained as I was as an engineer, and indeed carrying the baggage of an MBA from a “quant school”) will guarantee you that you will not only “have a better day,” but will (eventually) infect others! (And, uh, “productivity” will soar ... once “they”—your boss, your peers, your subordinates—get over the shock.)

John Kerry looks exhausted. (He has every right to be.)  
But his look of exhaustion, more than words or deeds or shrewd analytic explications, dramatically reduces the odds that I’ll go to headquarters tonight and man the phone banks.

So it goes, whether the issue is the fate of a nation, the progress of a project team or the likelihood of getting your way with a reluctant Motor Vehicles Department clerk.

“Effective Leadership” (and “Gettin’ Things Done” in general) Step # 1: Work on yourself!

Smile!  
Enthuse!  
Thank!  
Wow!

Win!  
Now!

## #6

### Think (Obsess) Legacy!

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Consider this a variation on our recent debate over the number of priorities a person can have. Well, I'm settling it.

One!

Here's the deal. It's 5A.M. (09.28.2004) as I write. I have a day crammed full of miscellaneous (that dreaded word!) activities ahead, ending with a flight from Boston/Logan to London/Heathrow. But the ... THE ... Pressing Question is: WHAT WILL (in One Sentence) THE LEGACY OF THIS DAY HAVE BEEN FOR TP?

Yes, I believe a Single Day can have as much of a "legacy" as a lifetime. In fact that had better be the case! Why? Because the day ... stretching out before me ... filled (at the moment) with limitless opportunities ... is ... ALL I HAVE!

Right?

Just another day?

Hardly!

THIS IS IT!

All those things ... grand and mundane ... I want to do with my life will either be abetted or thwarted or put off or ignored in the course of ... THIS ONE, UNFURLING DAY.

So: What (One Sentence) will Today's Legacy be ... for You?

## #7

### If No "Wow," No Go!

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Does "it" Pop?

Does "it" Sparkle?

Does "it" make you Grin?

Is "it" ... WOW?

If "it" (grand or mundane) isn't WOW ... re-do it! Or don't do it!

This is ... Your Day.

Not "their" day.

This Day belongs ... ULTIMATELY ... to You.

Not "them."

Cubicle slaves Unite!

Technicolor Titans rejoice!

Throw off the shackles of Conformity!

Just say/shout a throaty "No!" to Non-WOW!

So ...

WOW!

Now!

(No bull. This *is* do-able.)

## #8

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### Foul up. Fess up. Fast. Fastidiously.

SHIT HAPPENS.

SHIT HAPPENS TO YOU AND ME BECAUSE WE SOMETIMES DO STUPID SHIT.

WE RARELY GET IN TROUBLE FOR THE SHIT THAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT OF THE STUPID SHIT WE DO.

WE OFTEN GET IN TROUBLE FOR THE STUPID SHIT WE DO TO AVOID TELLING ABOUT THE SHIT THAT HAPPENED BECAUSE OF THE STUPID SHIT WE DID.

MESSAGE.

FOUL UP.

FESS UP.

FAST.

FASTIDIOUSLY. (Tell the Whole Truth.)

TO ANYONE YOU CAN FIND TO FESS UP TO.

BOSSSES.

SUBORDINATES.

THE GUY AT THE BAR.

OR IN THE WEIGHT ROOM.

THEN GET ON WITH LIFE.

I am *not* a moralist.

I am *not* arguing that “telling the truth is a ... GOOD THING. (Though I generally think it is.)

I *am* arguing that telling the truth ASAP is a ... USEFUL-PRAGMATIC-CAREER ENHANCING THING TO DO ... BECAUSE THE BOOGYMAN IS GOING TO GET YOU IF YOU DON'T. (I.e., bloggers cornering Dan Rather. Rather has a habit of being chased by weird people, come to think of it.)

And, actually, people think it's “cool” when you/me tell the truth—foul up, fess up, fast, fastidiously. (Soooo Cool, that maybe you should fess up to things you haven't done?) (Just a thought.)

Seriously: PEOPLE HAVE VAST RESERVOIRS OF FORGIVENESS FOR SINS INCLUDING STUPID SINS ... AND ARE THIN-SKINNED AS ALL GET OUT ABOUT EVASIVENESS AND CONVOLUTED EXPLANATIONS.

(“It depends on what the meaning of ‘is’ is.”)

"I screwed up with the customer" beats (by a country mile): "We lost the customer because the customer's people tripped all over themselves and couldn't come to a decision ... blah blah blah."

Or: "THE LIGHTS IN THE ROOM WERE TOO LOW BY WHICH TO SEE MURDEROUS DICTATORS." (Hey, even, "I like the old brute, used to go water skiing with him ..." would have been better. Right?)

FOUL UP.

FESS UP.

FAST.

FASTIDIOUSLY.

## #9

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### "Old" Rules!

Young is Cool.

Old is Rich.

Think about it.

I'll speak later today to the AHCA/American Health Care Association ... the trade association that represents assisted-care centers, nursing homes, etc. Problems? Sure. Lousy rep? Alas, yes. Opportunity? YOU BET!

I'm not one to provide "market tips." But I'll break the rule here. The "Boomer-Geezer Market" is more ignored than the women's market. Period.

80 million Boomers. The first turn 60 in 2 years. Tons of money. (Make that: Tons & Tons.) Not aging gracefully. Up for experiences. (Up for damn near anything, for that matter.) Long time left, given today's life expectancies in developed countries. Add in Geezers ... and ... Kaching!!

And ... underserved. Astonishingly so. Why? "Old" is definitely not cool in America. Never has been. (Even among the old.)

Hence ... OPPORTUNITY is not "knocking." It's pounding on your door. Products. Services. Experiences. Mass markets. Niche markets. International markets Japan and Western Europe are getting older even faster than we are).

As I said: Think about it.

## #10

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### Get up earlier than the next guy.

Flying to Boston from London on Saturday morning. 7 hours. Professional woman sitting in front of me. I duly swear, she did not look up for 7 hours. She produced more on her laptop than I do in ... a week ... a month.

I'm not touting workaholism here.

I am stating the obvious.



She or he who works the hardest has one hell of an advantage.  
She or he who is best prepared has one hell of an advantage.  
She or he who is always “overprepared” has one hell of an advantage.  
He or she who does the most research has one hell of an advantage.

I don't know about you, but I wouldn't have wanted to challenge “the woman in the row in front” in whatever presentation venue she was approaching.

## #11

### MBWA Lives & Rules & Is Ubiquitous!

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A commentary in this week's *Newsweek* by Jonathon Alter begins, “No wonder President Bush lost round one in Miami: He got rusty living in the bubble.”

Mr. Bush's bubble is indeed airtight. But, reader-bosses, you'd be surprised (just as the President was apparently surprised), I'd vouch, at how little air gets into your bubble, too!

Which takes me back to 1982. My *In Search of Excellence* co-author Bob Waterman and I were about to go on the *Today* show. We were practicing in Bob's Manhattan hotel room. And we got into a tussle. Turns out we both most loved the same thing in the book—and both wanted to utter the words on national TV. Having no dueling pistols at hand (even though we were right across the river from where VP Burr had killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel), we flipped a coin. Bob won ... and I'm still frustrated 22 years later!

The bragging rights at stake? MBWA. Remember? Managing By Wandering Around. (Courtesy a much smaller, more intimate Hewlett Packard.)

Well ...

Welcome to 2004. MBWA would have helped Pres Bush ... and it will help you. And the absence thereof will ... DOOM ... you.

The nice thing about MBWA is: “What you see is what you get.” The ... BIG IDEA ... is ... uh ... to ... WANDER AROUND. I.e., stay intimately in touch. I could go on for countless words (I have gone on in the past), but I'll keep it simple here:

GET THE HELL OUT OF THE CUBE!

DESERT THE TERMINAL! (“Terminals are terminal”? Not all bad.)

CHAT UP ANYBODY WHOSE PATH YOU CROSS ... ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE NOT AMONG YOUR NORMAL CHATEES.

GO STROLLING IN PARTS OF THE ORG WHERE YOU NORMALLY DON'T STROLL.

SLOW DOWN. STOP. CHAT. (“Stop. Look. Listen.”—a shrink's advice to me, courtesy railroad crossing lingo.)

NB: Email ... DOES NOT COUNT ... as “chat.” “Wander” = WANDER. One foot in front of the other.

Okay?

Extended Idea: *Wander Writ Large*. Put “wandering” on your permanent agenda! Consider: I was recently giving a speech to retailers. I had studied my butt off. Read a ton. Hung onto the Web for dear life. Phoned a dozen experts. My data was analyzed. My speech was locked into PPFinal status. I was in my hotel room in Chicago, at 3p.m. On a lark, I decided to take a stroll. I'm not ordinarily much of a shopper, but this day I strolled the streets and “wandered” into shops, apparently aimlessly, for a little over two hours. Got back to my room. Unlocked my PPFinal. And started all over again. (Outcome: Speech was a roaring success.) I actually can't tell you “precisely” what

I gleaned on that 2-hour excursion-wander. I can tell you it “changed everything.” That is, I got “in the zone” re retailing; I physically inhabited my Client-of-tomorrow’s world ... and it infused almost every sentence of what I subsequently presented.

Message: I am a zealot. I SWEAR BY MBWA. In any and all circumstances. Wanna join me? One last tip-idea: “Aimless” “wandering” takes discipline! And one *truly last* digression: Mr. Bush also serves us a reminder to “Mind your body language,” especially “when no one is looking.” Those “little” cutaways may have cost the Commander-in-Chief and World’s-Most-Powerful-Human dearly.

## #12

### Micromanage First & Last Impressions!

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First & Last impressions are your and my personal-career keys, and the keys to a company’s customer service report card. We both get that, of course. But: I don’t know about you, but I need ... *Constant Reminding*. For example, my wife rags on me semi-constantly for not looking people directly in the eye when I’m introduced. At first, I thought she was nuts, especially as I get paid sometimes to attend post-speech “G & G” (Grip & Grin) sessions with execs or top salespeople or key customers. But she’s right, I belatedly had to admit—I think it’s my soul-deep shyness. (No baloney; a lot of people who sparkle at a podium are withdrawn in more intimate settings—and vice versa.) Upshot: I’m working on it—and work it is; but worth it.

Back to the overall issue. Fox News CEO and uber-spin doctor Roger Ailes claims I/you/we have ... 7 SECONDS ... to make a first impression. And he gives us this advice: *First*: “Amp up your attitude.” Some people radiate energy, some don’t. But the don’ts at least can square their shoulders, and pump themselves up a bit. (“Energy” is not to be confused with aggressiveness. Energy is, in my opinion—I don’t know about Roger—mostly seen in the eyes.) *Second rule per Ailes*: “Give your message a mission.” That is, if you’ve got something you want to get from the interaction ... STAY ON MESSAGE. President Bush gets some low scores on oral presentation—but one and all agree he is the all-time master of staying precisely on message. *Ailes #3*: “Recognize ‘face value.’” A “poker face” works well in poker—but is a disaster in more normal human interaction, including in professional settings. Call it “animation” or “engagement” (my terms, not Ailes’); but it is different than raw energy; it’s something about being in the moment. And again, the idea is not to do jumping jacks—animation to me is mostly the intensity of concentration. (My wife—this time I think it’s a positive—claims my intensity of listening-concentration scares her half to death if it’s aimed her way. I wouldn’t know.) The “bottom line” here is more important than the specific points: PAY MINDFUL ATTENTION TO HOW YOU ENGAGE!! IT’S AS IMPORTANT AS “CONTENT”—LIKE IT OR NOT. (Idea: Imagine that Karl Rove and Karen Hughes were looking over your left and right shoulders respectively, as you approach an interaction. Think about what they’d be whispering in your ear right before ... contact.)

Organizationally, the notion is essentially the same. Recall yesterday’s Blog that included kudos to Griffin Hospital. Griffin says the first impression begins with ... Driving Directions! Prospective patients are already in a tizzy; lousy directions will only fuel their angst—and reinforce the idea that they are not in charge of their circumstances. Winners like Griffin obsess on driving directions, signage, music choice for the lobby, etc., etc. Of course Disney, no surprise, is the quintessential player here. My simple advice: BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY IMPORTANT—AND SURELY COUNT AS “STRATEGIC SUBSTANCE” IN ANY INTERCHANGE. Think through “B & Es” very carefully. Invest Time & Money & Training in “B & Es.” Hey: How about a new “C-level” job? Chief of Beginnings and Endings? Chief Start ‘n Stop?

## #13

### Make This Day Matter.

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If ... "My life is my message" ...

Then ... what will you/I do today to clarify and amplify your/my message?

Choose wisely. (WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?)

Review (and report ... to yourself) at the end of the day.

Repeat.

Daily.

Forever.

## #14

### Read (and Act On) These Three Books ...

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I think 99 out of 100 self-help books offer prescriptions that are too good to be true—or require commitments that are implausible. But as to the 1 in 100, or 1,000: I think the following three (ALL METICULOUSLY RESEARCHED) self-help/how-to books are worth 100X their weight in gold—and are as good as Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* and Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich*.

Namely ...

*GETTING TO YES* ... Roger Fisher, William Ury, Bruce Patton.

*LEARNED OPTIMISM* ... Martin Seligman.

*CRUCIAL CONFRONTATIONS* ... Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler.

I avoid such books like the plague. HOWEVER: I HAVE BENEFITED ENORMOUSLY (personally & professionally) FROM EACH OF THESE THREE. They "fill a compelling need" ... AND ARE DO-ABLE!

NB: Each of these authors/co-authors has produced a consistent body of work—c.f., Seligman's *Authentic Happiness*—that is worth the price of admission; I've simply chosen my fav of each lot.

## #15

### You Must Be Able to Answer This Question!

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And the question is: **WHAT'S THE DREAM?**

Plan.

Vision.

Brand statement.

Animating idea.

Beliefs.

All 5 of these notions are important. (Very important.) But none compare with: WHAT'S THE DREAM?

Great Performances are the result of a DREAM. (And, to be sure, a helluva lot of hard work and good luck and ... and ...)

But "it" begins with and is sustained by a ... DREAM.

A DREAM is "required" for an Awesome Business Process Re-definition project. For a training course. For a Great Night (\$300 in tips) ... Waiting Tables.

I will go so far as to say that any dream-free project/performance will be less than memorable. "Efficient"? Quite possibly. "Useful"? Quite possibly. "Entertaining"? Quite possibly. But ... RATTLES THE EARTH? Not without the ... DREAM.

Can DREAMS be ... "worked on"?

Absolutely!

I give about 75 speeches a year. Each begins and ends with ... THE DREAM. I start by imagining myself in the conference room-auditorium a month hence, facing 60 or 6,000 people. I AM (I truly am!!) DESPERATE TO MAKE A MARK, LEAVE A MEMORABLE, STARTLING, UPLIFTING CALL TO ARMS BEHIND. I cogitate and meditate on ... THE DREAM. An image eventually begins to appear (based on a boatload of research and an eon of enforced intuitive reflection). As the image sharpens (THE DREAM), I work like the devil over the next several days or weeks on the details (95% of my effort). When I'm "finished," I ask myself if the PowerPoint I've prepared as my skeleton ... Measures Up To The Dream? (And then I adjust and adjust and adjust ... and sometimes start over ... if The Dream has become blurred by too many "clever distractions.") Finally, it's a few minutes to show time. As I meditate back stage, I am working internally on only one thing: AM I CLEAR ON THE ... DREAM? IS THE DREAM CLEAR? And it begins. NOW I MUST CONNECT!!! I must ... CONVEY THE DREAM ... one person at a time!!! ... even in that audience of 6,000. (Message: Dreams are "sold" retail, not wholesale. ONE-AT-A-TIME. UP-CLOSE-AND-PERSONAL. Aside: That includes Blogging?!)

So ... imagine your current project.

WHAT'S THE DREAM?

## #16

### Have you sought customer feedback...ONE CUSTOMER...today?

Never.

Ever.

Get Out Of Touch.

With Customers.

Easy to lose touch.

G.W. Bush.

Me.

You.

BigCo.

WeeCo.

Must not happen.

Stop.  
Now.

Call a Customer.  
Out of the Blue.  
Ask (use these words): "How Things Goin'?"  
Listen.  
LISTEN.

Take notes.  
Meticulous.  
(Record in Special Notebook.)

Follow-up.  
FAST.

Repeat.  
48-hours hence.

Hint: This applies to 100% of us. Not just "bosses."  
We.  
All.  
Have.  
Customers.

*Hey, tompeters.com Clients (Ye, the Beloved!) ...  
How's It Goin'?*

## #17

### Work on Your Story!

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He/she who has the best story wins!

In life!  
In business!  
The White House!

Consider the following:

"A key—perhaps the key—to leadership is the effective communication of a story."—Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*

"Leaders don't just make products and make decisions. *Leaders make meaning.*"—John Seely Brown, Xerox PARC

"Management has a lot to do with answers. Leadership is a function of questions. And the first question for a leader always is: 'Who do we intend to be?' Not 'What are we going to do?' but 'Who do we intend to be?'"—Max De Pree, Herman Miller

"The essence of American presidential leadership, and the secret of presidential success, is storytelling."—Evan Cornog, *The Power and the Story: How the Crafted Presidential Narrative Has Determined Political Success from George Washington to George W. Bush*

"You are the storyteller of your own life, and you can create your own legend or not."—Isabel Allende

"We are in the twilight of a society based on data. As information and intelligence become the domain of computers, society will place more value on the one human ability that cannot be automated: emotion. Imagination, myth, ritual - the language of emotion - will affect everything from our purchasing decisions to how we work with others. *Companies will thrive on the basis of their stories and myths.* Companies will need to understand that their products are less important than their stories."—Rolf Jensen, Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies

"The past few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind—computer programmers who could crank code, lawyers who could craft contracts, MBAs who could crunch numbers. But the keys to the kingdom are changing hands. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind—creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers. *These people—artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers—will now reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys.*"—Dan Pink, *A Whole New Mind*

"In Denmark, eggs from free-range hens have conquered over 50 percent of the market. Consumers do not want hens to live their lives in small, confining cages. They are willing to pay 15 percent to 20 percent more for the story about animal ethics. This is classic Dream Society logic. *Both kind of eggs are similar in quality, but consumers prefer eggs with the better story.* After we debated the issue and stockpiled 50 other examples, the conclusion became evident: Stories and tales speak directly to the heart rather than the brain. After a century where society was marked by science and rationalism, the stories and values are returning to the scene."—Rolf Jensen/*The Dream Society: How the Coming Shift from Information to Imagination Will Transform Your Business*

(FYI: We have just posted a new "Special Presentation": "The Power Is the Story.")

I have concluded that "the brand" is encompassed by "the story." There is a slide in the new Special Presentation that simply reads: Story > Brand.

Storytelling is a refined art. Maybe it comes naturally to your or my 79-year-old Grandpa, but it didn't/doesn't to me! I WORK LIKE HELL AT IT!

Do you ever make "presentations"?  
I bet the answer is, "Yes."

Well ... STOP.  
NO MORE PRESENTATIONS.  
EVER AGAIN.

I stopped years ago.  
I NEVER GIVE PRESENTATIONS.  
I DO ... for pay, no less ... TELL STORIES.

As I prepare I am conscious ... 100 PERCENT OF THE TIME ... of the evolving story, of the plot, the narrative that unfolds.

For example: Regardless of the intensity of the urging, I never submit my presentations ahead of time. That's because I rework them—keep refining the plot, the flow, the rhythm—until moments before I go on stage. I suspect that in the last few hours before a speech, I go through my "script" well over 100 times.

Your task—TODAY—is a short story.  
Your current project is ... a story.  
Your career is ... a story.

HE/SHE WHO HAS THE BEST STORY WINS!  
SO ... WORK ON YOUR STORY!  
MASTER THE ART OF STORYTELLING/STORY DOING/STORY PRESENTING!

(More to come.)

## #18

### “Lunch Management”

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We’re all in sales! That’s one of my recurrent themes. Or, to make it more personal: IF YOU CARE, YOU’RE IN SALES. That is, if your project Matters to you, if you have a Burning Urge to get it done ... then the Only Route is the ... Sales Route.

Which brings me to #18. I’m not begging you to become workaholics. (Whoops, maybe I inadvertently am. Since my work is my love, I’m a “Love-a-holic”—not a “workaholic”—when I spend another hour blogging. Right?) At any rate, Loveaholics-Workaholics-SalesFanatics ... DON’T WASTE A LUNCH! (Or, at least not many.)

Work is Love.  
Work-Love implemented is Sales.  
Sales is Relationships.  
Relationships is ... LUNCH.  
Clear enough, eh?

Consider each lunch an “at bat.” (Hey, it’s playoff time.) Four workweeks at five days each (I’m going lite on you) adds up to 20 “at bats” each month.

20 opportunities to ... have lunch with your pals.  
20 opportunities to start New Relationships.  
20 opportunities to nurture Old Relationships.  
20 opportunities to patch up Frayed Relationships  
20 opportunities to “Take a Freak to Lunch”—and learn something new.  
20 opportunities to test an idea with a potential Recruit-Alliance Partner.  
20 opportunities to ... MAKE A SALE.

No, I’m hardly urging you to ignore your pals. And if you “used” all 20 monthly “opportunities” to the utmost I’d think you were over the top. (Or determined to become the next Donald Trump. Or President in 2016.) I do urge you to consider Lunches as a Precious Resource. Each lunch gone is gone for good ... or some such.

20 per month. 240 per year. To a Major Leaguer, each At Bat is Precious. To a Loveaholic ... committed to her-his project ... each lunch is equally Precious.

Agree?

## #19

# Zen & the Art of Spoon-banging Change.

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**“Some people look for things that went wrong and try to fix them. I look for things that went right and try to build on them.”**—Bob Stone, Mr. ReGo

Bob Stone was Al Gore’s point man for reinventing government—hence the Mr. ReGo moniker. He got an amazing amount done in a short space of time. And in the process he rewrote the book on “corporate” change. (And he kindly wrote a book to explain what he’d done: *Polite Revolutionary: Lessons from an Uncivil Servant*.)

Bob, as I see it, was a Zen master, a Sumo wrestler—a Master of Indirection. (Ha! Maybe that would be an apt substitute for the ever-questionable MBA!?) He full well knew that he could not force change on the Federal bureaucracy; even the President rarely succeeds by frontal assault. And as a Pentagon refugee, he knew the silliness of producing ever-to-be-unread, always-to-be-ignored encyclopedic “White Papers” and fat manuals.

So he turned to the art of storytelling—and resurrected the always faithful “accentuate the positive.” Hence the Gospel According to Stone: “I look for things that went right and try to build on them.”

He knew there were astonishingly effective, renegade Civil Servants (Uncivil Servants?) dotting the landscape. The trick was to ferret them out, certify (via Mr. Gore) their heretofore shunned approaches, applaud them in public, cast their results in Monuments of Documentary Film ... and shame scores of others into following the lead of their obstreperous peers.

There’s much more to the tale—see Bob’s book, or my précis of it in Chapter 17 of *Re-imagine!* (“Boss Work: Heroes, Demos, Stories”). The point here: I urge you to become ...

An organizational Zen master.  
A sumo wrestler.  
A Master of Indirection.  
An “accentuator of the positive.”

Jill Ker Conway played the same game with matchless skill. Ms. Conway, though appointed as the first woman president of Smith College, found herself not only surrounded by skeptical tenured (mostly male!) profs, but also without budget to implement the very programs she needed to make her reign different from that of the feckless old boys who had preceded her. Enter Zen. She nosed around the campus (like Stone) and discovered a robust Change Underground. She met with them, encouraged them—and urged them to begin the process proclaiming their views publicly. As to the absent money, she concocted the Mother of All End Runs. JKC became The Tireless Traveler. The hell with standard budgetary sources of bucks. There was a Change Overground of Smith Alumnae who were beside themselves with glee at the belated appointment of this first female prexy. She met and met and met some more—and cajoled and cajoled and cajoled. And soon had enough “external,” off-balance-sheet funding to Pilot (Demos again!) several programs that eventually became the hallmarks of her wildly successful term of office.

All hail the Sumo wrestler from Northampton, MA!

Message: Powerlessness is (mostly) a state of mind!  
Message: With a dab of Zen here and a shudder of Sumo there ... Mountains Can Be Moved!  
Message: We can all become Uncivil Servants!

Start today!



## #20

### Work, Work, Work ... to Connect!

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#### Always Make It Personal!

I gave 5 speeches last week, in 5 different countries-cultures. Watching (one can—*must*—learn to watch intently as one speaks!) audiences respond, I've re-learned a few lessons. None more important than ... CONNECT ... MAKE IT PERSONAL.

For one thing, I'm a nut about reading local papers, or chatting up anyone I can grab to get a flavor of what's afoot, or just hitting the pavement. So in Sweden, for example, I began by talking about my trip the day before to the giant local department store, NK, and shopping a long list foisted on me by my wife, who did 4 years of professional training in Sweden—in fact I described being on my cell phone to her, as she directed me around the store by memory from 3,000 miles away. (It didn't hurt that I called NK "the world's best department store"—which I think it is. Appreciating someone else's turf nabs mega-points! Duh!) (On the other hand, I've screwed up on this. I once offhandedly criticized a Tampa hotel I was staying in to a Tampa audience. My remarks were not perceived as generic "customer service lessons"—as I had intended; but as a frontal assault-insult aimed at Tampa, Florida, and each-and-every audience member!) In Germany, I played shamelessly to my German blood and my "Germanic" engineering background—and teased incessantly about the need for them, and me, to overcome some share of what we'd heretofore thought of as strengths (e.g., rigid adherence to the "one best way"). In Italy, as I reported in an earlier Post, I showed up in a gorgeous Italian shirt and tie, purchased the afternoon before, joked about the price—and then tied the whole thing to my spiel on design and new approaches to value-added.

Bottom line: A speaker is always ... even in a 10-minute interchange ... attempting first-and-foremost to form a common heritage with the audience. Any speaker worth her or his salt wants to move an audience to act. That is only accomplished, in my experience, when "they" are converted into "we." WE ... are confronted with this challenge or that. WE ... must get beyond the places we are ... JOINTLY ... stuck in today. WE ... are frail and battered ... but ... WE ... must act with dispatch. And so on.

For George Bush or John Kerry or me-in-Frankfurt ... it's all about ... Making Common Cause! The argument may be airtight, the data unassailable, but if it's not ... UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL AND "SOLD" AS A JOINT CHALLENGE ... AND OBVIOUSLY FROM THE HEART ... then it is perceived, especially in another culture, as an ... Assault By a Thoughtless Stranger!

BTW: To state the obvious, the tougher the sell (and mine are pretty tough ... as in "forget everything you thought you knew and that made you successful") ... the Tighter the Human Bond must be!

BTW: This is hard, conscious work!

And, on a related subject ...

## #21

### It's ... Showtime! All the Time!

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Joe Pine and Jim Gilmore gave us the Great Gift ... the book *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theater & Every Business a Stage*. OH HOW I LOVE THAT TITLE! As well as the Fundamental Hypothesis: "EXPERIENCES ARE AS DISTINCT FROM SERVICES AS SERVICES ARE FROM GOODS."

Or, in TP lingo: IT'S ALWAYS SHOWTIME!

"Showtime" =

Every speech!  
Every PowerPoint presentation!  
Every individual slide!

Every Client phone call!  
EVERY INTERCHANGE WITH A "FOURTH-LEVEL" CLIENT "ADMIN ASSISTANT" ... who may make a negative (or positive!) comment to her boss's boss (who signs my check!) about an off-the-cuff comment I hastily made.  
Every employee interaction ... especially when I'm stressed and/or grouchy.

Every Post at tompeters.com!  
Every 7(!)-second eye contact with someone who asks me to sign a book!

And so on.  
And on.

Am I hopelessly uptight about all this?  
Sure. (Why do you think I revise the font-choice on a single slide 15 minutes before an A/V check?)

But no, too; "it" (being on) has become a way of life, as natural as breathing. (My beloved wife says it takes me 2 or 3 days, after I've been on the road, to quit "preaching to 4,000 people.")

Is this "no way to live"?  
Hell, no!  
I love it!  
I love what I do. (Remember ... Love-a-holic!)  
I am ... Desperate to ... Make a Difference!

I hope you are too.

SHOW TIME ... ALL THE TIME ... is Very Cool!

NB: "Experiences" are as distinct from "services" as services are from "goods"!

## #22

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### A "Mission Statement" That Matters!

I hate "mission statements."  
Or "vision & values" statements.  
Especially when they appear on plasticized cards.

Why?

I totally support the notion of the importance of ... Clear Values. (Hey, Bob Waterman and I practically invented the whole thing via *In Search of Excellence*, 22 years ago.) Like all good things, the idea has been attenuated beyond recognition. A Tepid Top Team goes "offsite," to someplace warm in February, produces 6 insipid statements that (1) differentiate them/the company from no one; and (2) they have no clue as to what it really means to live up to these statements, assuming they were serious in the first place, and not just following the herd. (No one has absorbed Gandhi's "You must be the change you wish to see in the world.") Then they (3) return home, have their gin-soaked "gem" immortalized in plastic ... and hand it out ceremoniously to 20,000 of the Unwashed as Holy Writ.

Yuck!

But all that's changed ... for me!  
In a flash!  
Now I'm a fan!  
Bring on the plastic!

I was at a WooWoo resort last week in (Warm Place), giving a speech. Got up, as usual, at 4:00 a.m. Alas, room service not open 'til 6:00 a.m.—pretty crappy, but I can't expect everyone to share my strange habits. So at 6:00 a.m. sharp (6:04, actually ... I took note) I call and place my complex order: a pot of tea. (Period.) I'm told it will be "about 30-40 minutes." I think to myself it's outrageous, but I hold my tongue. (I want—NEED!—the tea.) Some 45 minutes later ... NO TEA. I call room "service" ... and ... IT HAPPENS!

The guy says he's sorry but ...  
But ... "IT'S NOT MY FAULT."

(You know, the Gremlin stole the teapot, we're outta hot water in Arizona, or some such.) (That's when I ... lost it ... and no amount of "right breathing" helped in the least.)

But ... IT WAS A GOOD THING!  
Now I—finally!—realized I'd "seen" (it was almost religious) an inkling of a "mission statement" I could imagine & live with & publish & plasticize & champion!

I immediately put it on a slide, and used it to tee off my remarks a few hours later ... to vigorous applause. Herewith the "slide" /idea/Supreme Mission:

### **XYZ Corp: Complete Vision & Values & Mission & USP Statement**

**Any Service or Product is yours  
for absolutely NO CHARGE  
if any employee  
including the CEO  
ever says  
or implies  
at any point ...**

***"It's Not My Fault."***

### ***V. Big Cheese*, Founder, CEO & Dictator**

If we could flatly & finally eliminate "It's not my fault" from the explicit or implicit vocabulary ("life style") of room service clerks—and CEOs!—many of the world's woes would be instantly righted.

If ... ACCOUNTABILITY ... and ... SELF-RESPONSIBILITY ... were our routine practice, well, how fabulous! How effective! How profitable!

So I invite you (Way to Succeed #22, remember) to fully adopt for yourself and your tiny or huge enterprise, temporary or permanent, my ... COMPLETE VISION & VALUES & MISSION & USP STATEMENT!

Eh???

## #23

### Design Means You!

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Sure, “design” means DHL spending Gazillion\$\$\$\$ on ... YELLOW. IT’S THE NEW BROWN.

But that’s not all.

*Design means ... me obsessing on line breaks and “...”s in the presentation of this Blog.*

*Design means ... me ... at age 61 and somewhat successful ... going through more than 25 drafts of a mere update of my Official Bio ... that will be circulated to Clients for the next several months.*

*Design means ... me worrying equally about presentation style as content ... 365/6 days-per-year.*

*Design means ... my abandoning a Great Publisher (Knopf) to go to Dorling-Kindersley so I could get the sort of design treatment for my books (E.g., *Re-imagine!*) that added up to Marshall McLuhan’s famous “The medium is the message.”*

*Design means ... that every action I take is Consciously Mediated by my implicit-explicit “design filter”: That is ... HOW DOES THIS COME ACROSS? COULD IT BE CLEARER? CRISPER? MORE EXCITING?*

(My last Client ... London Drugs ... “got it.” The president told me that my goal/minimum success standard was to “make the audience gasp.” Nice, eh?)

I “am” design!  
It works for me.

I invite you aboard!  
It’s a daunting journey ... and an exciting one.  
It’s near the Heart of the Matter in a BrandYou World.  
(Hint: We live in a BrandYou World ... like it or not.)

You = Desire to Survive = BrandYou = Branding Fanatic = LoveMark Fanatic (thanks, Kevin Roberts) = Design Fanatic.  
Q.E.D.

## #24

### Agenda-NoteTaker-Notes Publisher “Spin” Power!

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He/She who writes the Agenda and Summary Doc (innocently called “Meeting Notes”) wields ... Incredible Power!

Believe it!

The question is innocent, “What should we cover at the Weekly Review Meeting?” The response is not. The “agenda” is in and of itself a Group “To-Do” list. (More important than any pretentious “strategic plan.”) And: A “To-Don’t” list. (What’s left off ... to the Supreme Annoyance of many Power Players.) Moreover, some stuff will be at the Top ... some at the bottom (and probably won’t get covered, or be given short shrift). Hence a “mere” agenda Establishes & Determines the Group Conversation for, say, the week, or even the Quarter. And ... the lovely catch ... concocting the Agenda by soliciting members is typically a “crappy task,” unwanted by one and (almost) all.

My message: **GRAB IT!**  
(And chortle as you do.)

Of at least as much importance is the grubby-demeaning “Notetaker” (and Publisher thereof) task. Talk about ...UNVARNISHED POWER! Everybody is so damn busy preening, interrupting, bullheadedly pushing their pet peeve, etc., ... that they seldom hear what actually goes on. Only the meek & quiet Notetaker knows the story; and long after the participants have washed the memory of the meeting clean from their crowded lives, the Notetaker’s Summary comes along explaining what transpired ... Carefully Edited.

You get my drift, I presume. The “powerless” soul who agrees to “develop the agenda,” “take the notes,” and “publish the notes” ... may just be the ... TRUE POWER PLAYER!

(I believe this so strongly and fear it so greatly that I religiously publish my own version of notes, in summary form (never more than 4 or 5 lines), within minutes of the end of a meeting—just to try and co-opt the damned notetaker. I call it ... Spin!)

## #25

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### Hustle!

Hustle!  
Noticeably!  
Now!  
And evermore!

(Msg: Hustle begets hustle! And, of course, the converse. Duh.)