

## A Personal Note

**A** lot of people have encouraged me to write a memoir. Well, finally I've given in. This six-course series IS my memoir. This six-course series is solely about the things I care deeply (very deeply) about. The things that have emerged either since the day in 1966 when, fresh out of school, I became a combat engineering battalion detachment commander in Vietnam, or the day in New York in 1977 when the Managing Director of McKinsey & Co., Ron Daniel, posed a magical question that determined my life's course to this day; he avowed that he was sick and tired of the Firm's brilliant strategies continually failing the implementation test—what the hell was missing?

Ye gads.

Metaphorically at least, I found the answer 30 miles south of where I ordinarily worked in McKinsey's San Francisco office,

**The columnist David Brooks famously said that there are two kinds of virtues, “resumé virtues” and “eulogy virtues.” The eulogy virtues are about helping others grow. And, the eulogy virtues, over the long haul, are also the premier profit producers: Doing work that wows customers and developing people for tomorrow and the day after.**

at the Palo Alto headquarters of then upstart (yes, it was a while ago) Hewlett-Packard. And the answer was . . .

MBWA, Managing By Wandering Around.

Managing By Wandering Around means wandering around with no specific goal and shooting the breeze with folks on the line as neighbors would. “What are you working on? Show it to me. Cool, but could it be even cooler?” MBWA was about what I came to call “people first”—or my more aggressive contemporary version: “people (REALLY) first.” Wander the workspace. Daily, some would say. Listen “fiercely,” as one researcher put it. Listen naively, and without the prejudice developed during your 15 years at the company. Encourage another try and then another. Put people in touch with others who are noodling about similar things. The company I saw was a million miles from a staff-driven, analysis-obsessed, sterile bureaucracy. It was, first and foremost, a human community (“Tom, look over there, that's Bill Hewlett chatting up a young engineer”) where getting the job done—and helping people grow like crazy in the process—was the oft met aspiration.

Yes! Yes! Yes, organizations first and foremost—if they're worth a damn—are communities where succeeding in the marketplace and in

the workplace for one and all is the overriding aspiration. And, of course, what we found in the 1977–1980 work that culminated with the publication of *In Search of Excellence* was that firms that gave a damn and took great care of their people, and made Excellence their standard, outperformed the rest over the mid-to long-haul.

In the years that have passed twists and turns have been added, but the basic idea of creating a humane culture, taking care of your people and preparing them for tomorrow, and getting everyone to play the innovation game is the path to doing exciting work for your customers.

Organizations, even in these days of advanced robotics and surging AI, are (still) ultimately human. Maybe not 40 years from now, but sure as heck for the foreseeable future. I don't think any algorithm would have led Commerce Bank/Metro Bank CEO Vernon Hill to give away several million dog biscuits in his gorgeous bank branches. It's one of a jillion human touches that keep customers coming to the branches (while competitors shutter theirs and toss bodies out by the truckload) and allow Hill, in the USA and the UK, to dislodge millions (!) of his competitors' customers, turn them into enduring "fans," and bring them to the "Yes bank," where there is no limit to how far Hill's minions will go to keep their customers happy.

I want to share all that and much, much more in these courses. I offer 99 steps in six courses, but they, in fact, have a similar flavor. The topic may be innovation or execution or value-added strategies. But the real topic, to repeat myself is, yes, excellent communities that serve—with excellence—employees and customers and the communities in which they work.

Hoover Institute (the home of ultra-conservatism) heavyweight Paul Weaver reviewed my third book, *Thriving on Chaos*, and concluded, "Mr. Peters says that effective management is management that delivers more value to customers and more opportunity for service, creativity and growth to workers. He is saying that the decent thing to do is also the smart thing. It's a wonderful message."

Yup, 99 steps. 99 challenges. But one goal: To create vital workplaces that score for our employees, our customers, and the communities in which we live.

The columnist David Brooks famously said that there are two kinds of virtues, "resumé virtues" and "eulogy virtues." The eulogy virtues are about helping others grow. And, the eulogy virtues, over the long haul, are also the premier profit producers: Doing work that wows customers and developing people for tomorrow and the day after.

So, this is my memoir. The lessons within are the things I've stumbled across that are worth writing about in 18 books and worth talking about in 3,000 speeches in 60 plus countries. There are 99 points here, but actually only one: Organizations that care about people and thence deliver the goods to customers.

Who could ask for more?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Peters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a stylized "P".