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My Work/Life Balance Lessons

By Steve Luchetta

As a project executive, I can be involved with as many as 10 projects on a given day. They are typically in different stages – new business, preconstruction, construction or closeout – so I’m always juggling. I’m also married with three busy teenaged daughters and I’m very involved with my church, so there are times when life gets pretty crazy.

And yet, while I work continually to balance my faith, family and friends, I will admit that there’s some natural overlap among all three that makes things a bit easier. My church and its diocese have become Turner clients, my family thinks of many people at Turner as family, and we count many of my colleagues and clients among our friends.

I’ve also received help with the work-life balance process from colleagues around the country who have talked about the importance of avoiding burnout. They continually stress how important it is to make time for family. Taking that to heart, I took my first two-week vacation last year, and I’m taking another one soon.

Here are some other things I’ve learned that make a difference for me:

- **Schedule transition time before and after your vacation.** I make sure I have no appointments on the Friday before my vacation so I can return calls, create a task list, and meet with my direct reports to discuss what needs to happen in my absence. I do the same thing on my first day back in the office.
- **Become a planner.** When we vacationed in Italy last year, I had a binder with our tickets and a printed itinerary with color-coded activities. My family kidded me about it, but they admit that it helped keep things running smoothly so that we enjoyed our time together.

The Investment That Will Change Your Life

Here is an investment that will change your life for the better, starting immediately. It requires no financial expenditure, but its personal and professional payoffs have proven priceless for millions of individuals, as it will for you. (Reading time approximately 180 seconds).

I was fortunate in my early 20’s to be exposed to the importance of a positive attitude. The best I’ve heard it expressed is life’s attitude towards you is a reflection of your attitude toward life. Life is just like a mirror. Smile at life, it smiles back. Frown at life, and it will scowl right back at you.

I learned this very quickly in my first career ...cold calling selling. You know what that is? Walking into someone’s office with no appointment and “trying” to get someone to see you.

When I started I would go up to the receptionist sheepish, frowning and say something like, “Ahh, I’m Jim Bird with ABC Corporation. Do you think Mr. Johnson might be able to see me for a minute?” The reaction almost 100% of the time was “DO YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT?!” And things went downhill from there. I was financially starving until I changed my attitude.

My income skyrocketed when I learned to do the following. As I walked to the receptionist desk I would listen and look for her name. Then with a big smile I would stick out my hand to hers and say: “Hi Monica, I’m Jim Bird. How are you doing today? I’m here to see Bill, Bill Johnson. Will you tell him I’m here.” Guess what happen. Lots of receptionist went and got Bill for me.

We are all selling all the time, even if it is not our profession. When you make a presentation at a meeting you are selling your ideas on how to get something done. When you try to get your significant other or friends to go to the movie you want to see you are selling. And a smile and a positive tone will improve all your “selling” results with your co-workers, family and friends.

But what if you are not a natural smiler? How do you get a big smile on your face and an upbeat attitude, when your palms are clammy going into that important meeting or discussion? I’m not a natural smiler at all, so I had to learn a way. And I did. The method is surprisingly simple.

Before you step in front of the person, or begin your presentation at the meeting, just **think of something that really makes you happy**. It could be chocolate, or pizza pie or some type of adult play activity...whatever makes you happy. Just dwell for a few seconds now on something that makes you smile. Feel the grin coming on. Do that before you shake someone’s hand or say “Hi” or start your presentation at the meeting, and you will begin with a big smile. Don’t worry; they don’t know what you’re thinking.

The reality of life is that your attitude determines the outcome of your actions more often than anything else. Generally: Good Attitude - Good Results; Fair Attitude - Fair Results; Bad Attitude - Bad Results. And this is true whether you are dealing with people or tackling a project.

If at the beginning of a project you say this is going to be a pain and take forever, you will struggle through the project over a long period. If you tell yourself I am going to crank this thing out and get it done quickly and well... that is what you almost always will do.

I am not saying that if you change your attitude the facts of life change. They do not. What I am saying is that a negative attitude, no matter how good your skills are, stacks the odds against you in life. And a positive, upbeat attitude increases your odds for success tremendously.

Our attitudes are incalculably powerful. They can bring about marvelous Achievement and wonderful Enjoyment. And yet 10’s of millions of us are waiting for the world to change towards us, before we will change towards the world.



- **Find an interest you can share with your family.** I love to play golf and managed to convince my daughters to give it a try; we now enjoy playing together three or four times a month.

- **Keep those friendships.** Making time for friends can be a challenge, but they are an important part of a balanced life for most of us. Some of my friends have also become Turner customers, which is an added bonus for me.

- **Decide what's important to you and protect the time needed for it.** I often need to be at business events or dinners during the week, but I save Tuesday nights for my men's group at church. Similarly, my weekends are devoted to family time. I'm lucky that my general manager supports this.

Steve Luchetta is the project executive in the Southern California business unit.

Quote from Charles Swindoll

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life... Attitude is more important than the past, the education, the money, than circumstances, than failure, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our Attitudes.

Charles Swindoll is an American Writer and Clergyman, b.1934

Instead what we need to do is to make a 30 day investment...an attitude investment that can literally change your life. It will prove beyond a doubt the value of a positive attitude.

What all of us have to recognize is to get a return from life, we have to make an investment in life. Whether in the financial world, our home life, our everyday dealings with people, there is no gain unless you take some risks.

And like the financial world, sometimes you lose...you smile and they frown back. Sometimes you receive a little return...you smile and they smile back. And sometimes you get a huge payoff...you smile and make a best friend, or get the job, or the promotion or the new client.

But if you make no investment, take no risk, there is no possibility of gain.

So I propose for the next 30 days that you make an attitude investment. Invest a smile, a friendly attitude, an interested tone, a question. Really listen to your spouse tonight over dinner. In doing so, **think of every person you meet as the most important person in the world** and treat them accordingly. You'll be amazed at what happens.

There are two reasons why you should treat your server at lunch with the same positive attitude as your best friend or client or boss.

#1 – Because to them, they are the most important person in the world, even if it's more sub-conscious for them than conscious.

#2 – Secondly, it forms a great attitude habit, that works automatically for your benefit.

So for the next 30 days make the attitude investment. Treat everyone you meet as the important individual he or she has the potential to be.

Remember too that the world does not care whether you achieve or enjoy, whether you are happy or sad. That is your responsibility.

And to continually get the joy and success, value and balance that you want from life everyday... you must think with a process (**Thinking** Vikki - Insert link to newsletter Thinking – The Will to Prepare to WIN), and then act and play with an ATTITUDE! A strong, expectant, lover of life attitude...based on good thinking.

So I encourage you to consciously make this 30 day investment. If you've done it before you know it works. Smile, wave, interact with EVERY person you encounter as if they are your favorite rock star, or business icon. "Wow, 'Hi'!...it's Bill Gates!", or whoever you might admire.

You will start seeing the payback immediately and after 30 days you will have formed an attitude habit that will provide you great returns over a lifetime.

Smiles,
Jim Bird
Publisher

E-Tip

Greet and treat everyone you encounter today as if they are the most important person in the world. Listen for and use their name, even in a brief encounter. Smile. Be interested in what they have to say. You will find the world changes.