

May 07 - Release 1: Now I Look Back and Have to Laugh

“Now I look back... and have to laugh. I was my worst enemy, it almost got the best of me.” -- *The Descendants*

“We must tend to our own gardens first.” -- *Voltaire*

A few months back I was doing a background check on a CEO candidate who was going to get an offer. Immaculate pedigree: MBA from a top school, strategy consulting, private equity funded start ups in the exact industry of my client, international immersion... and best of all, he was incredibly personable and I could easily imagine him fulfilling the leadership role.

One of his references turned out to be a psychologist. He had been hired by the private equity fund that had invested in my candidate to give organizational design advice and to serve as an “in-house shrink” to their portfolio of companies. He had developed a very strong relationship with my candidate and they had kept in close contact since he had moved on.

Me: “So tell me, why do you think this gentleman would be a good fit for the demands of this position?”

Reference: “Well, above all, he is driven to succeed.”

Me: “Why is he so driven?”

Reference: (after a brief chuckle) “Like many accomplished people I have met, he is fundamentally *insecure* and he will work to the ends of the earth and time to try to prove his value to the world. The issue here is that his perception of himself will probably never change, so long as he uses someone else’s metrics to judge him.”

WHAMMO. This was one of those obvious truths, immaculately veiled by the socially-accepted misguidance that those who have more are more ‘successful’ (and thus happier) than those with less. My mind quickly jumped on reinforcing trains leaving from this central station.

The recollection of a top-tier strategy firm who actually looked for folks who were extraordinarily smart but who lacked that sense of security/confidence. (From a quality of deliverable perspective, this is brilliant – “Team, we will work

until this analysis IS undeniably perfect and looking like the second Birth of Venus .”).

Then the black churls of smoke from the stacks of a significant number of leaders and entrepreneurs I have worked with started making my eyes water a bit. So much talent, so much drive, but so much arrogance and (looking back) blatant personal unfulfillment.

This is not to say that people who **are** secure with themselves can't rise and do extraordinary things. In fact, this may be a significant separator from the merely accomplished (who if they aren't skilled at recognizing and dealing with their liabilities may eventually implode) from those who impact the world in truly noble and scaled ways (a good portion of politicians of all persuasions being excepted here).

And from my vantage point, having the courage and conviction to work your passions – and meet your mission - can provide an extraordinarily (and intuitively) **easy** way to define how you want to measure your success and the tracks that will take you there.

Upcoming Events:

Las Vegas -- June 25th: Society for Human Resource Management's Annual National Conference. Presenting *“Passion for Work: How to Build an Impassioned Organization”*. (This is going to be an amazing presentation!).

Dover, DE -- August 8th: Life After Americorps. Presenting Passion at Work and follow on workshops.

Translation Update!

Passion at Work has been translated into...yup, you guessed it... Lithuanian! So, please inform any/all Lithuanians you happen to know that the power of The Ps is now written in their source code.

Until next time... stay in trouble out there!

My best, L