

The Great Ones Online Volume IV

The Power of Passion

I remember going to the Wintergreen Ski Resort in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia to get a part-time job for the winter. Through a small amount of research, I had determined that the resort paid more money than any other part-time work for college students and it seemed like a great idea to me. Plus, you could ski and take lessons for free as an employee. With the zest and zeal that only naïve youth can muster, I sauntered into the employment office with three goals in the back of my mind:

- ☐ To make a little money, so that I could
- ☐ Party as much as possible, and
- ☐ Meet lots of girls.

As you can see, I had lofty expectations of myself, all of which landed me a job in the rental shop, where for hours I would hand out skis, help people with their boots and replace ski poles. I quickly realized that the men and women in the green jackets that worked outside (ski instructors), had the dream job. They made more money, their clients bought them drinks, and the green jacket was a magnet for the opposite sex. Go figure.

The solution seemed obvious. I needed to be a ski instructor. Except for one minor detail. I didn't know how to ski—at least not well enough to teach. Add to that the issue that there were other enterprising young men who also figured out the perks to teaching and skied far better than I did.

Enter the power of passion. Unlike the other employees who complained about the long hours or the lame clients or whatever, I determined to be the best employee in the rental shop. I then took

THE GREAT ONES

{ A B u s i n e s s F a b l e }

The Transformative Power of a Mentor

lessons as often as I could and I made a point of stating my intention to Ed, the head of the Ski School. I also jumped every time he walked into the rental shop to help him out with any need he might have.

Fast forward about a month. One evening, 55 buses showed up on a charter deal from Washington D.C., far more beginners than the Ski School could ever handle. After an hour and a half of handing out skis, into the Rental Shop walks Ed, with a scraggly, beat-up green jacket.

“You’re working outside tonight,” he said.

That was my last night in the Rental Shop. For the next seven years, all the way through Law School, I kept that part-time job and had an absolute blast doing it. In fact, in my closet, I still have my old green jacket.

What’s the take away? I wanted it more than my competitors. I was willing to do more, give more, sacrifice more. The Dictionary defines passion in a number of ways, though here’s the most relevant to this story: “...extreme, compelling emotion; intense emotional drive or excitement; enthusiasm or fondness...” In the end, there were other wannabes who talked about me and my lack of skiing ability behind my back. Meanwhile, they were handing out skis in the shop while I was outside on the snow.

As Steve Batoff says over and over, we must pursue what we love. I love to ski. I still do. Every year I fly to Colorado to spend a day or two riding up and down the ski lifts with a distinguished gentleman—can you guess who? Aaron Young, my mentor, who you know from Volume 1 of this series. If we did not share that common interest, I would never get that kind of one on one time with him—and what a gift.

This simple story applies to any endeavor or business. We must nurture our passion for it. In Edict VI of the Code, it states:

“We must therefore take an *active* role in fueling the passion that keeps us churning and moving toward our goals. We have to

THE GREAT ONES

{ A B u s i n e s s F a b l e }

The Transformative Power of a Mentor

focus on our goals and dreams, visualize them in full living color. What do you see? What do you feel? What do you smell? What are the shapes and textures around you? What does your office look like in your accomplished company? What suit will you wear to accept the award for “fastest growing company” in your sector or the plaque for the philanthropic donation that you made from your profits?

So put up a dream board; fill a box full of pictures of the things you will acquire; tape a photograph of something you want on your bathroom mirror; do anything that reminds you of why you work so hard.

Talk to yourself in the present affirmative. Feed the subconscious with positive imagery that paints your picture of success.”

And surround yourself with people who support your dream.

Steve Batoff, as the financial advisor and counsel to the mega-successful, makes another crucial point. Act with integrity always. This mandate seldom came up in my interviews unless I asked about it. Why? Because it is so obvious to those who have reached the pinnacle of their careers that they don’t even think about it anymore. As an attorney who sees what happens when people do and don’t operate from integrity, Steve found it prudent to drive this point home—with poignant talk and an admonishment to all of us. Do what’s right.

In Edict IX of the Code, the potential downward slide is illustrated:

“Lack of integrity acts as the X factor for failure. You never know where something will go wrong; and sometimes, in the outer material world, nothing shows. That seed of doubt, however—that little voice inside each one of us that does “know”—spreads its tiny roots and takes hold. It makes the next “oversight” easier. The next ethics compromise seems less problematic, and the pattern establishes itself. The slippery slope turns ever slicker; and the end result is a long downward slide.

THE GREAT ONES

{ A B u s i n e s s F a b l e }

The Transformative Power of a Mentor

The causality that governs both the conspicuous and inconspicuous universe has infinite ways of manifesting its effects. The done deal sours. Your key employee gets an offer they can't turn down, and leaves. The freeway runs through the neighbor's land and not the property on which you speculated that is now worthless.

As the saying attests, if you lie around with dogs, eventually, you will get fleas."

Fleas come in so many ways, none of them attractive. Conversely, when we make the right call, do the right thing, stay the course, the universe begins to support us, both through allies that appear, and our own inner forging that makes us stronger.

From the Code again:

"Life calls for many tough choices. At times, the best decision may be much tougher to make and the consequences in the short term may not appear to work in your favor. But the road to becoming a Great One is long; the allies you acquire along the way will grow in strength; the inner character you build for yourself will become unshakeable; and the result will ultimately manifest."

No one said that the path to becoming a Great One was an easy one—nor should it be. It is reserved only for the passionate and for those who understand the honor and pride of acting with integrity. As the old saying attests: "the happiest hands are clean hands."