

“Ethics refers to the basic human values of integrity, love, and meaning.”
— Peter Koestenbaum

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE: Make More Than Money

Real Profit

To experience true fulfillment, we need a bottom line that leads to our own peace of mind. That way, business success and achievement will follow naturally. The ultimate goal of any business organization is to make a profit—and when I say business organization, I include churches, synagogues, schools, colleges, hospitals, and other so-called non-profits. In a business sense—I dare say in a spiritual sense also—all organizations function essentially the same, whether they are for profit or not-for-profit. Non-profits that do not adhere to good business principles become fat, inflated, and dysfunctional and eventually perish.

Money, in some form, is the lifeblood of every organization. Paradoxically, if making money becomes the driving force behind the health, well being, and growth of our organization, it could also lead to its demise. The extrinsic value of the money does not feed the intrinsic spirit and passion of a business organization.

The Meaning Of Money

Even if money is initially the driving factor, once an organization or its owners reach a certain level of material wealth, wealth in itself ceases to become the goal. A higher universal consciousness and responsibility transcend the profit motive. Some people try to satisfy their greed by amassing more and more money, but it will never mollify their hunger. The soul does not crave money. The soul recognizes only the everlasting, of which money

represents a possible means rather than an end. Money is not the real juice that fuels the success of our enterprise; the passion and excitement come from a longing to experience the joy and mystery of our inner being.

Money Makes The World Go 'Round

My original motivation for going into the contract cleaning business was money—money that would buy things that I never seemed able to afford while working as an air traffic controller, such as a new luxury car, a second home, and financial security. Although I earned good money my entire life, I never seemed to get ahead. That is, until I started my own business. When I started Adams and Adams Building Services, my goal was to grow the company to gross sales of \$1 million within the first three years. Considering my resources and lack of business experience, that really proved to be an illusive aspiration. I had no idea what constituted a million dollars worth of cleaning business or how many people I would need to service that volume of contracts. The other objective that I set for myself was that I wanted to be able to retire from the business within ten years, at the age of forty-six.

Julia Cameron introduced the concept of the elusive “there” to me in *The Artist’s Way* and, as time went on, success took on different forms.

My *theres* kept changing and being replaced by new *theres*. Once I got *there*, a new *there* appeared. At first, the goal was to get enough accounts to survive, to make a living, pay the mortgage, and put food on the table. Similar to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, I was reduced to struggling to maintain my primary needs. Once I got enough jobs to fill my schedule, I began to hire others to help me. As our company grew, I eventually advanced to the place where I wanted that new fancy car that I could never afford before. To me, that was

the 1986 metallic gray Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme on Fiore Oldsmobile's showroom floor (my first customer, and the car I dusted off three days a week). I got the car and my *there* changed to a bigger and better one—a house at the Mystic shore and, eventually, to a farm house in Enfield, Connecticut.

The Disappearing “There”

When I dated my second wife, she had an apartment on Poquonnock Road in Groton. She moved in with practically nothing. I helped her gather up some used furniture—an old couch, end table, and a lamp with an ugly shade that she covered with a beautiful scarf. We threw a mattress from the back of my Ford Econoline van onto the bedroom floor covered with green, shag carpeting and made beautiful love. We had hardly more than two knives, two forks, two spoons, two cups, and two plates as eating utensils. Life was often chaotic, but we were happy. We married in 1985. We were making great profit at that time, which enabled us to buy the house in Mystic, the farm in Enfield, and a new, 1987 Oldsmobile '98 for Magdalena. I worked like a madman. We traveled extensively to places like Greece, Paris, and throughout the U.S. Magda quit her job and went back to school to get her MBA. Even though it looked as though we had it all, and had reached our *there*, we had hit a road block short of self-fulfillment, because we were looking outward rather than inward for the answers.

The reason *there* disappears is that it is not out there in some form. *There* is inside, deep in our soul. *There* is the yearning to transcend the impermanence of this world, and return to our creative nature, where we connect with the Source of our being. We are

continually searching for the tangible to satisfy ourselves, when the only real satisfaction comes from our spirit.

Natural Miracles

In the beginning, I ran the company more for growth than profitability. Intuitively, I believed in many of the things that I discovered later along my spiritual path. For instance, I knew profits would follow if I did three things: first, focus on the development of the people in our company and give them the best we could afford in salary, benefits and recognition of all kinds; second, pay attention to values and ethics without succumbing to the temptations of greed, realizing that doing the right thing always outweighed doing the profitable thing; and third, take a sharing approach towards our members and our customers. It worked. I did not know why at the time. It just worked. Only later did I discover I had been doing something naturally that became one of our *Principles of Upside-Down Thinking*. Universal law says that if you take care of others, strive for truth, accountability, ethics, fairness and justice, and the conscious spiritual aspects of building a business organization, profit will naturally follow. This does not refer to avoiding hard decisions needed to maintain the health of an organization. Including saying goodbye to people who are not pulling their weight, cutting a customer off who has not met a payment agreement, or refusing to be a caretaker to those who have refused to take responsibility for their own actions.

Tenderly Tough

Tough decisions go along with tenderness. Being kind does not mean to neglect good business and people practices. It does mean establishing boundaries, guidelines and clarity of purpose, process, and procedure. For instance, although I did not agree with everything that

President Ronald Reagan did during his administration or the decisions that he made, I did appreciate the clarity of his leadership style. Everyone knew where Reagan stood. Even before he fired the Air Traffic Controllers, he gave us forty-eight hours to return to work. When we refused, he did exactly what he had said he would do. Later, during his administration, when he was being attacked and criticized for his policies and decisions, I wrote him a letter of support. A thank-you letter and an autographed photo of the President now hang in my office. It is there not because I agreed with him, but because I respected him as our President and as an admirable leader.

Profit From Within

When my second marriage ended in separation, I was down on my knees in tearful surrender. It was then that I discovered the true profit motive—that no amount of money or business success would bring me to a place of inner peace and happiness, and that the key to salvation was within.

The Fifth Principle reminds us that loving our customers for who they are, rather than how much they spend, will pay big dividends. It is about the good we can accomplish through our dedication and hard work, not our worship of money. In our next chapter, you may discover some of the things you have been hiding from as you *discover the real power of forgiveness*.

“Try not to become a man of success, but a man of value.” — Albert Einstein

*“One who seeks truth
does not escape
and if he does
he does not beat himself for that
and if he beats himself
he does not feel guilty about that
and if he does
he accept that he does so
and if he can't accept that
he accepts that he doesn't accept it.*

*One who seeks truth
has to catch hold of himself
somewhere
and if he can't
he may accept that he can't
and if he cannot accept that
he is in a funny position
but that is where his maker
wants him to be.”*

—Words of an Ancient Sufi