

“Beautiful things make money.” – Geoffrey Beene, Fashion Designer

THE EIGHTH PRACTICE: Senses Mean Business

Honoring The Senses

Why do we neglect some of the most important aspects of living when we think of growing our business or organization? Enjoying life involves the use of all of our senses: of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, but especially the sixth sense—“knowing.”

As you build your team and create your offices, keep all of your senses in mind. If you live in the colder climates, what a difference it can make if your windows face south and drench your office in bright sunlight. Contrast that with a dark, windowless office where the sun never shines. How about the sounds within your work environment? Have you thought about music that quiets the turmoil within or lights a fire of inspiration?

Music

Have you noticed the music and videos playing on the airlines these days as you board the plane? The hurried, stressed, business passenger or tired vacation traveler staggers onto the airplane and immediately hears the soothing sounds of music composed by artists such as Carlos Nakai, Enya, or David Lanz. On the video monitor are gentle scenes of nature, vast mountain ranges, babbling brooks, and meadows filled with wildflowers dancing in the breeze. The airline companies know the calming power of music and the effect of peaceful, visual scenes.

Décor

Consider how your offices are decorated. Are the colors bright and vibrant, soft and soothing, or dull and lifeless? Do you have fine art reproductions hanging on the walls, or are the walls stark and naked? How about plants...lots of them? Will you take the extra effort to purchase and maintain beautiful plants and flowers that bring natural energy into your office and help purify the air?

What is the first thing you see when you go into a luxury hotel? I always notice the big bouquet of fresh flowers in the front lobby, lush plants, and the richness and beauty of the carpet and wall coverings. My jaw drops when I walk into my favorites: *The Plaza* in Manhattan, the *Hotel Del Coronado* across the bay from San Diego, *The Breakers* in Palm Beach, and the *Hotel Meurice* in Paris. I can't afford to stay in any of them, but I love to visit their lobbies, dine there and enjoy their ambiance.

Taste

We can have the same feeling of culture and luxury in our own workspace without spending a lot of money. I often notice the candy treats on a receptionist's desk or at a customer's workstation. One of our managers at Adams and Adams Building Services kept little candies in her desk drawer (*Kit Kat* and tiny *Milky Way* bars). On her desk was a big, red plastic *M&M* dispenser man. When you pulled the arm down, it rewarded you with half-a-dozen chocolate-covered candies. People always stopped to say hello to her. It was such a treat. At one point, she took away the candy for a couple of months, but I noticed it came back again. I bet I know why. It became part of the culture of her little cubicle. Company members missed that treat and begged for it to return.

Development Pride

When I owned Adams and Adams, one of the last big jobs we landed was taken over from a large, international competitor. We inherited their janitorial office and many of their cleaning specialists. The office was dark, dank and dingy. The first thing we did was paint it a bright white and then I bought a huge, framed poster from the Successories® company depicting the Statue of Liberty. It read: “Pride is a personal commitment.”

That big, two by two-and-a-half foot framed poster was hung right next to our account manager’s desk. With the poster, new paint job and our new organization came a sense of renewal within that tiny space. This is what *Spirit at Work* is all about. Our attitude, belief, enthusiasm, intent, and all the big and little things we do to create an atmosphere of bliss and unlimited possibilities, enable us to see the miracles in our everyday life—*ordinary miracles* I call them—gifts that we fail to see unless we are attuned to them.

The Art of Feng Shui

Feng Shui, which means “the way of wind and water,” is an ancient Chinese art, science, and philosophy. It is the practice of arranging one’s physical environment to best capture the natural energy (Chi) that surrounds us. I might not go so far as arranging my office furniture according to the points of the compass, as *Feng Shui* suggests, but the discipline is a very valid way to bring out the importance of how we set up and appoint our workspace. Leading companies such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *British Airways*, the *Body Shop*, and even Donald Trump have put the art of *Feng Shui* to work for them.

Nurturing our internal working or home living environment contributes to honoring our soul. As Candace Czarny of *Wind & Water, Inc.* states:

It is the internal environment we live in that plays an integral part in creating the external aspects of our lives. If your internal environment is one of balance and harmony, a space that is nurturing, where you feel safe, secure

and at peace, you can let go of the day's challenges and come back to your source of power. Then you can start each new day refreshed and rejuvenated.

Our Office

One of the first things that many new visitors to our offices in Enfield would say to us is, "It feels so peaceful here. I wasn't expecting this from a cleaning company." We put periwinkle and deep-blue silk flowers in the waiting room (given as a gift by my insurance agent and friend of twenty-five years, Art Loschiavo, who has now passed on). On the walls hung beautiful works of art and posters displaying positive affirmations. The thought for the day was posted at the receptionist's window. Pictures of members and the awards they have received hung everywhere. Our members and guests were greeted by lots of plants, bright colors, sunlight, coffee and tea brewing in the cafeteria, always something to eat, open doors, and an open work area.

Universal Traditions

All cultures of the world share similar universal traditions. They include the love of music, dance, song, art, and ritual. These ingredients are essential for building a company culture reflective of the inner spirit. They are critical to releasing the potential of our organization and allowing a culture to develop where people can feel a sense of belonging. Our longing for community could find no better place to encounter fellowship than where we spend the majority of our waking life—in our workplace. In some of the most successful companies in the world today, you find this sense of belonging. Hewlett Packard created such a bond that, at one time, they had to lock people out on Sundays to force them to stay at home.

The people in these organizations might demonstrate a sense of commonality in a variety of ways. They have a synergy, a common purpose, shared goals, a belief in the

organization, and a feeling of identity. After-hours softball games, bowling, or socializing with the gang on Friday night all contribute to building a corporate family. The struggle against great competitive odds and the journey from being the underdog to a champion create a lasting bond. These all establish a sense of community, an *esprit de corps*, that involves all the senses, especially that sixth sense that tells you, “I know I can make a difference here; I feel I belong, I’m at home, and I love my job.” A feeling of hope is occurring in the enlightened business as of today. This is another “ordinary miracle” we all deserve to experience.

Finding The Answers From The Still, Small Voice Within

An awareness of knowing is a vital part of our senses that is most often attributed to our sixth sense. Finding the answer to the recurring critical question, “What path will I take?” is continually at the forefront. How do we discover our path? Who will show us the way? What do we do when we see so many different directions to choose from?

The answers lie within—within us. There is a knowing, deep within us, that can tell us the next step to take and the pitfalls to avoid. By staying connected to that knowing, that inner voice or intuition, we will always be able to trust that we are heading in the right direction, even though our critics may try to convince us otherwise. One of our chief critics is also within. It is that voice that says, *You can’t. You are not good enough. You are never enough. What makes you think you can pull this off?* It is that loud, ceaseless, chattering that seeks to disable us. Quieting our inner critic allows us to hear the still, small voice that holds the true answers.

We can connect with this voice in many different ways. Many people find meditation reveals that knowing, or Yoga, which is a physical form of meditation seeking to integrate

the human spirit with the Spirit within us. Walking alone silently for twenty minutes or more can open our awareness. I discover many of my “answers” while running or working out at the gym – in a state where the endorphins kick in and I am on a natural high. When I have a problem to solve or an answer to find, physical exercise leads me to the solution.

Use the method that quiets your inner critic and lifts the veil from that still, small voice. Try different methods such as deep breathing, walking or dancing free-style, maybe an especially comforting musical rendition, or just sitting and allowing your body to soak up the sun.

Mary Beth

A young mother named Mary Beth wanted to learn how to meditate, so she started to attend transcendental meditation classes with her best friend. As hard as she tried, she was never able to get into that alpha state—a euphoric state of transcending this world, letting go and returning to bliss, which feels like floating on clouds in a heaven on earth. One day, her girlfriend, who was taking meditation classes with her, watched as Mary Beth washed dishes at the kitchen sink in the bright sunshine.

“Mary Beth,” her friend called out. Mary Beth did not answer. “Mary Beth,” her friend called out, once again, more loudly, as she grabbed and shook her friend’s shoulder lightly.

“What?” Mary Beth said, as if awakened from a trance.

Her friend said, “Where were you just then?”

Mary Beth said, “Well, when I’m washing dishes in the sunshine, it’s very relaxing and sometimes I just lose track of things.”

Her friend laughed and said, “Do you realize you are meditating? You’ve found your bliss in the sunbeams of your own kitchen.”

Bliss is not really hard to find. It is so accessible that many tend to overlook it. Discovering it may be different for you than for others. It may also involve a variety of techniques. Just remember that once you hear the right answer, you will feel certainty and peace as you exclaim confidently, “Yes, of course, how simple.” Afterwards, your internal critic and the “naysayers” out there may try to change your mind. Don’t listen to them. Endeavor to trust your Inner Guide. Even though other critics may warn you that you are going to make a fool of yourself, go forth with deep trust, and an unyielding belief in the truth you have found.

Mastering this principle is critical to the success of any business. As an immense amount of data is directed at you, your first step is to separate the big rocks from the pebbles and the grains of sand as demonstrated in the Second Practice. When you get to the big decisions, your Inner Guide – sometimes called your heart or conscience—will tell you which direction to take. As you become more attuned to this powerful decision-making process—one that requires a clarity of your values and ethics—decisions on the little things as well as the big ones become easier.

I have a spiritual practice that I am dedicated to daily. In the morning, I read *A Course in Miracles*®. Then I meditate and pray. During that time of silence, meditation and prayer, I dedicate the day to God and ask for continual guidance from what I call the Holy Spirit. It does not matter what you call this decision-maker, or how you meditate or pray (our prayers are all different, yet all directed to the same Source). What does matter is that we have a program to connect with our Inner Guide, to become centered, and to become aware. When we are in that place, the questions, the problems and the demands can be lined up from

our door, down the hall to the parking lot. They can all be screaming for attention, but you will know which ones to listen to, which ones to tell to “have a seat,” and what actions to take.

Around The World Without A Plan

I love to travel. I used to plan my trips in great detail. That is, until I realized that doing this ruined the whole adventure. If I had a traveling companion, the scheduling and planning put unnecessary pressure on both of us. Once I started to let go of my need for complex, advance planning, the trips went so well that I began to let go more and more.

In the winter of 2001, I took a trip around the world. Before I left, I did make some contacts in several countries that I planned to visit. I purchased an airline ticket from Providence, Rhode Island to Los Angeles, California, to New Zealand, and then on to Sydney, Australia. However, I purchased no tickets within Australia or to my departure point, Perth, on the West Coast.

My ticket resumed from Perth to Johannesburg, South Africa, then down to Cape Town, back to Johannesburg and then home via Kennedy Airport. The only firm commitment I had was to visit family members, whom I had never met in Christ Church, on the southern island of New Zealand.

Just before I left Connecticut, I decided I would de-plane in Auckland (on the north island) to see my cousins. At the arrival waiting area, I looked at the people sitting and standing about. I walked right over to my cousin and namesake, John Adams, who looks nothing like me and whom I had never seen before. I knew him from being connected to my intuition. We spent some time in Rotorua, a magnificent volcanic area, before I went on to Christ Church.

Once in Australia, I discovered a price war was going on between domestic airlines. Several of them had recently begun service after the government had de-regulated air travel within the country. I ended up flying very cheaply.

In Johannesburg, I stayed at a backpacker's hostel for a couple of days to become acclimated to the culture and traditions. From talking to other travelers, I discovered some of the best places to go and how to get there. Due to the great exchange rate—eight *Ran* for a dollar – I was able to afford a little red rental car and traveled around the country. I never knew from one day to the next exactly where I would sleep. The trip was fantastic. What made it so easy was constantly listening to my intuition. My inner feeling of where to stop and what to see led me to marvelous little towns, lodges and hostels, where I met people from all over the world.

This is just another example of how your life can change when you begin to listen to that still, small voice within. Throughout this book there have been suggestions and exercises to get you started or advance your listening skills. You can start your day out right by dedicating yourself to listening for guidance. Then relax and enjoy the trip.

Balance of the mind, body and soul is the result of attention to corporate mental, physical and spiritual health. A healthy work environment is not limited to our physical surroundings. It encompasses the whole human experience, which includes our senses. Music is still music if played only on a violin, but incorporating all the instruments of the orchestra creates a symphony of experience. Put your business ensemble together by combining this Practice with the Eighth Principle, “Your business is not of this world,” and you will be partnered with the Divine.

A cold, spartan work place is no place to bring out the senses that mean business. Start redecorating now with the little things that matter to our senses.

Now that we are sensitized and open to our Inner Guide, it is a good time to talk of our oneness as a company of members. That comes in our next chapter, *“Unify Through “We” Power.”*

“The senses are the guides that can take you to the inner world of your heart.”
— Anam Cara

***“In the workplace, words are our most frequent tool,
and the leader’s words can work magic,
can create the environment and the work and the
morale, and can create a whole new way of thinking.”***

— James A. Autry