

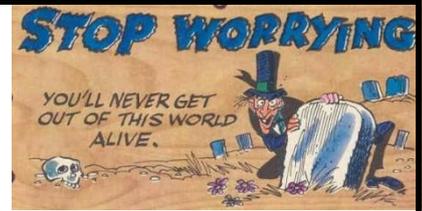


SO - what did I personally learn in 2020? Amidst the doom and gloom, I tried to be observant rather than judgemental about what I witnessed. It tested me. It was tough because I continue to see the rise and rise of stupidity born from ignorance or distraction. There's no point in wallowing in judgement. Judgement prevents you from making an unbiased observation. This results in the inability to see an upside to a bad situation or a third alternative to a problem. Seeing an upside is about optimism. Finding a third alternative is about combining creativity with respect. I've managed a few buzz words in this opening monologue. I'd like to explore them with a view to offering some insights and tips that might contribute to your New Year's resolutions - so here goes!

OPTIMISM: There's no point in **not** being optimistic. Every moment of your life should be just as important as every other moment. Our friend to the right is living (for now) and **choosing** to enjoy a moment, regardless of his future. You never know what moment is going to be your last. Ironically, adrenalin junkies relish the possibility of the ride they're on being their last. I'm not that brave but totally get the notion of 'living'. Not everyone who's alive is 'living'. So for 2021, practice optimism - it impacts outcomes!



OPTIMISM VERSUS REALISM: There'd be people out there who'd read that last paragraph and say, "yeah but be realistic"! Realists are often just pessimists in disguise. When someone tells you to be realistic, it's often just to rain on your parade. As Jeffrey Gitomer once said, "It's probably because they don't have a parade of their own". So for 2021, keep your dreams and goals private, Be quietly prepared. Not everyone you know wants you to win. As my good friend John Blaine said, "it's the hard work that you do when no-one is watching that helps you achieve the accolades when everyone is watching. Thank you John."



CREATIVITY: Creative people and being creative can often look odd to the observer. The trouble is; the observer is usually the one who gets left behind when the creative person becomes the trend setter or entrepreneur. So for 2021, put your Nikes on and just do it. Exploit your individuality. Enjoy challenging convention and bucking the system because conventions and systems are designed to control hierarchies which don't champion the individual. Unrealised potential is the greatest sin you can commit.



BUSY VERSUS PRODUCTIVE: Creativity is about being productive. That takes some time and often doesn't bear fruit immediately; so any satisfaction derived from it is put on hold until the results are apparent. In the go-go-go of the modern business world where results are measured daily, this can put pressure on you to appear busy. Being busy makes you look like you might be doing something worthwhile like old mate here. Unfortunately busy-ness isn't business. Only productivity is. Try practicing productivity.



RESPECT & OPTIMISM: Leadership will be the real vaccine for what ails us. In 2021, set **great examples** ! The best leaders followed first. The best leaders didn't always have titles. Bosses have titles. Leaders have charisma. I said the caption to the right once to the worst boss I ever had as I walked out the door. He didn't get the irony. I was attracted to the brand but resigned from the man. I showed optimism in my rebuke of him. He was the best leadership coach I ever had because I learned what not to do.



AMBITION: If you're a leader, be choosy about whom you employ in 2021. I've said it before and it's still true - "you're better understaffed than wrongly staffed." Also, take care of orientation and make sure that the diversity you attract doesn't cause division. The way to do that is to rethink your mission statement. Is it time to create a new "post-covid world mission statement", created by and contributed to by your team? This increases the chance for a unified vision of the future and regulates behaviour towards achieving it. It makes accountability easier too. If you're ambitious, learn to gain commitment from customers before you make it but show respect first before expecting it from anyone. In the world of padded playgrounds and participation medals, you weren't prepared for retail and service industries that expect results. The job starts when you do!



THANKS THIS MONTH TO SERG KRJATIAN, LUKE WIERCINSKI, MARK BLUNDELL, RYLEY JONES & THE TOPPS CARD COMPANY FOR THE WACKY PLAKS PICTURED HERE THAT I COLLECTED AS A KID. HAPPY 2021!