



NO. 149 FEBRUARY 2023

STUFF

SWC
CONSULTING

SKILL, WILL & CONSCIENCE

www.stephenwren.com.au



I enjoy writing STUFF the most when it's random as heck! That's why it's called STUFF! So, this month, I've dedicated the balance of the page to random stuff. I've got more books than the Mitchell Library, read many of them and always humbled at the wisdom that is on tap for every one of us to benefit from. Here then is my offering. Snippets of wisdom, randomly collected, recalled and submitted for your scrutiny. Each snippet is in bold black italics and any thoughts of mine follow in blue. Remember – BE THE BENCHMARK. Cheers all!

SNIPPET

People value the likelihood of experiencing pleasure today far more than they fear the possibility of consequences tomorrow. *This is paraphrased from Prince Machiavelli's book, "The Prince" published in 1532. Nearly half a millennia later, we've exacerbated it by almost totally removing consequences for when the 'pleasure' crosses the line of legality or morality. I wonder how much more we can compromise before there's little or nothing left to sacrifice.*

SNIPPET

If you interrupt your impulses by connecting with your goals during crucial moments, you improve your chances for success. *Bravo – especially if your goals involve improvement or resurrection from failure. Chances are, whatever it was that caused you to fail or put you in a position that needed fixing, snuck into your life under your radar. A reminder is insurance that it won't reoccur. AA is good at this. This is why writing down goals works. Otherwise what do you reconcile progress against?*

SNIPPET

Bad habits are almost always a social disease. If those around you model and encourage them, you'll fall prey. Align with similar minded people and your behaviour no longer relies on will power alone. *Soaring with eagles or walking with turkeys can be a choice. Maybe not how you started but it's where you finish that counts. Remember too that misery loves company. Not everyone you share your dreams with wants them to come true for you. Best to keep it to yourself*

When the achiever achieves, it's not a plateau, it's a beginning. This is in direct opposition to your comfort zone. Comfort zones are seductive but they breed regret. Nothing special happens when you're comfortable. Ask any elite

A leader has the right to be beaten but never to be surprised. Napoleon said this. I'd expand on that and tie in Einstein's "the definition of insanity is to do the same thing repeatedly and expect a different outcome". I guess it might be comfy

SNIPPET

Don't confuse forgiveness with weakness. For example if you indulge the trouble maker, you may pat yourself on the back but check for knives while you're there. On the other hand, showing patience with someone who has potential can inspire affection and loyalty. Right on! Take the immortal Carthaginian general Hannibal for example. He was by no means a nice man. I guess niceness doesn't march many elephants over the alps does it? If you're a team leader and if you have to 'appear' ruthless, minimise backlash by clearly defining what needs to be done, the deadline for doing it and the consequences if it isn't. Then it's only ruthless in the eyes of those who fail. Others see it as leadership. Then be consistent. I can't help but conjure up a few more random thoughts; Think about what you're achieving rather than what you're doing. Meetings are indispensable when you don't want to do anything. The absolute key to failure is to try to please everybody.

SNIPPET

Modern business environments are often hamstrung by tiresome rounds of conference calls, meetings about meetings, brainstorming and blue sky thinking. They're designed to create friction where none need exist and can usually be attributed to the CEO's need to exercise his or her ego. Egos are essential to any competing organism but like a guard dog, need to be muzzled as they can tend to bite a friendly once in a while. The best ego a team leader can exhibit is pride in the successes of the team or of an individual who they are responsible for.

SNIPPET

Here's a question from a book I read: Can you employ 'out of the box' thinking whilst remaining within the framework and constraints of team effort? I didn't like the answer, so I'll offer mine. The answer is a resounding YES provided you don't care who gets the credit if the idea is initiated and the result is successful. Great leaders look out the window to assign credit and in the mirror to assign blame. Out of the box thinking is essential if you want to differentiate yourself from someone you compete against. This is why comfort zones are so dangerous.

SNIPPET

Luck is what happens to you after you've given 100%. The man who looks well does well. The man who sounds well does better. The first sentence comes from Machiavelli. The second from Ben Franklin. Wisdom across the ages ay? If you want to change your output, think about your input. How are you programming yourself via your subconscious? The input you either knowingly or unknowingly default to becomes habitual and it shows in your behaviour. Change takes courage. If you seek to eliminate all risk, you only guarantee either failure or obscurity

Prioritise your focus. Sometimes we contemplate the meaning of life and then at other times, whether the bloke in front of us in the express queue actually has 10 or less items! Consider failure: It's natural not to want to focus on failure for example - especially after a disaster. However, to actually grow we need to learn. So rather than fear it, study failure as well as success. Everyone experiences it but the question is; what have you done to prevent that particular failure from happening again? Have you changed your BEHAVIOUR. To change your behaviour, you need to change your input. Understand failure and then engineer its removal.

THANKS THIS MONTH TO PAUL DOVE, MICHAEL KANG, ALICE PITT, BRAD FRENDON AND TROY CHELSOM