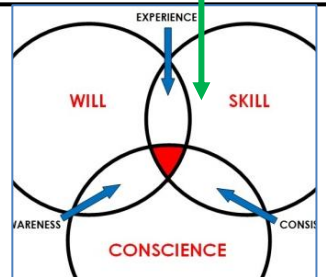




STUFF

So the game show host asks the contestant; "Which movie won the Best Picture Oscar for 1956?" The contestant replies, "1956! That was before I was born. I don't know!" How commonly do we hear that answer these days and not just to game show questions? History is by definition about things that happened before we were born and I'm witnessing a trend in our communities that's so self absorbed, so distracted by quick fix entertainment, so lied to or deceived by an agenda driven media, so lost in the maelstrom of marketing tsunamis, manufactured shallow celebrities and a social media that grows uglier every day, that they've become disenfranchised, apathetic and as a result, easy to rule. That's the danger. If the price of freedom is eternal vigilance, than the ticket to slavery is apathy through ignorance. Counting down the top traits that contribute to excellence; for September I'm going to examine, dissect, probe and encourage **KNOWLEDGE**.

To the right is my excellence model and I've placed knowledge square in the **skill** sector hard up against **will** and **experience**. Simply put, you need the **will** to learn. When you have it, **KNOWLEDGE** is what you gain. Learning something new is inspiring which fuels the **will** to learn more. This assures your relevance through credibility and evolution. That's **experience**. If you're a go-to person, I assure you, it has a lot to do with the way other people view your knowledge and the relevance it gives you. Here's the danger; the opposite of knowledge is ignorance. Ignorant people still have experience. Maybe a lifetime of it. It's groundhog day. Never mistake stupidity for ignorance. Ignorant people are in the dark. Stupid people know where the light switch is but choose to remain in the dark. So, let's take a look at knowledge and its many ramifications.



Never have we had so much information at our fingertips and so little between our ears. Easy accessibility to knowledge makes people complacent and offers a false sense of readiness. The lag time between a question asked and an answer offered can cost credibility. The spontaneity of knowing something off the top of your head on the other hand amazes the ignorant, impresses the customer (and the boss) and you go from credible to incredible. You are now becoming indispensable.



TIP: In sales & service, first impressions are vital to lasting impressions. Being able to find common ground is critical but attempts to do so are often perceived as cheesy. The way to be interesting is to be interested. This is where a little knowledge about a lot of things is better than total knowledge about your product or service and little else. That's anal and the reason your accountant doesn't moonlight as a stand up comedian. It's very satisfying to conclude a sale with minimal presentation but maximum conversation about just about everything or anything, bar the product or service - or price, in question.

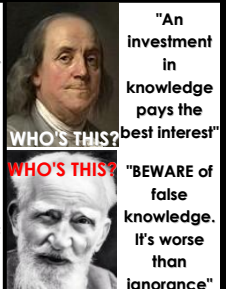


Knowledge is power which is why throughout history, repressive regimes have literally burned books. Nazis, the KKK and ISIS loved a good bonfire if it meant controlling the masses through thought policing. George Orwell nailed it with his prophetic "1984". Dumbing people down is a bit subtler now than it used to be because the weapon is distraction and language control. PC is the modern fascism. It stifles debate about important issues by bogging down in arguments over protocol. The ensuing name calling gets more press than the subject; which is forgotten. Orwell was ironically wrong by the way - instead of Big Brother watching us, we're watching it and I'll bet the fans wouldn't have a clue where the name came from. The affect however, is the same. Want proof? Take a look at our current federal political situation. Only total apathy allows this



THOUGHT: Ever wondered why you were made to study Shakespeare at school? Your job doesn't require you to recite Hamlet!! What the heck was that about right?! Well, here's the reason. Whether or not it's relevant, it exposed you to a broader world and the discipline required to learn it transferred to other disciplines. Personal bonus; I'm happy to keep my own culture alive in this world of multiculturalism.

TIP: If you're a reader, keep it up. If you're a goal setter, read bios about people who achieved whatever it is your goal aims at. I guarantee you're not the first and someone has assuredly written about it. If you're more of a visual person, watch two TED talks per week. That's roughly 36 minutes of your life. Technology, Education and Design is the acronym. They're all over YouTube. At their best, they're great. At their worst, they give you the opportunity to be critical. That means you've learned. You've learned enough to have an opinion & to be discerning. Choosiness assures standards & growth.



A "NO PRIZE" if you can name them

BOTTOM LINE: Until further notice, you only live once but once is enough if you do it right. To compete socially and professionally, you need to be powerful. Once upon a time, that meant bigger and stronger. Nowadays, it means smarter. Don't be fooled into thinking ignorance is bliss. The same person who said that said "if it ain't broken - don't fix it!" That's a call to inaction. All it breeds is regret. Avoid regret! How? As Zig Ziglar said, "The rule is simple - you do it now."