

Openings: Political activist Ines Hernandez has the following to say about one's life work:

"To be revolutionary is to be original, to know where we came from, to validate what is ours and help it to flourish, the best of what is ours, of our beginnings, our principles, and to leave behind what no longer serves us."

Spotlight: Everyday, at least one person chooses you over every other person in the world. They turn to you because they hope that you are exactly the right person to satisfy their requirements. Rising to the occasion and validating that person's decision is the single most important thing that you do during your day. Turning the uncertainty of inquiry into the confidence of action builds long-term relationships and successful enterprises.

While enterprises expended much energy influencing the decisions that people make, another approach is to work at reducing the number of decisions people must make. Our lives are filled with decisions and the level of stress we experience is directly related to how well we believe we are making these decisions. If a person is confident in choosing you, the decision does not create additional stress. If a person knows that in choosing you that they never have to make that decision again, their stress is decreased. If a person, after making that first decision, discovers that you are eliminating other decisions from their busy day, you have established a long-term relationship.

The freedom to choose is very different from having to make choices. Given the freedom to choose, people often continue to choose exactly the same thing until it no longer satisfies them. Even after something stops being satisfying, people can continue to choose it with the hope that it will once again be satisfying. The decision to use a different product or a different vendor is usually made reluctantly because it requires new decisions. From this perspective, there is no such thing as losing a customer, there is only driving a customer away. Whether you cultivate or discourage customers is a choice expressed by your enterprise through every interaction and transaction.

While your customers come to you for what you do well, your niche in the market, they also come to you for assistance in making decisions. Satisfied customers will always ask for products and services outside of your niche. It is not that they believe you have expertise in these areas but because they have experienced your expertise in satisfying their need for decisions. That expertise is much more valuable than any other skill you offer. When you are not in the position to satisfy their request, you do not have to send them away. Whether through recommending another business or sub-contracting the work, you want to maintain your decision making position. While customers' needs change with time, they are always making decisions and looking for assistance in doing so.

Anticipating what your customers want takes great imagination. Life is interrelated in circuitous routes so that which does not look obvious at first, may be a natural fit. It is only when we juxtapose possibilities that the obvious synergies appear. Become your customers' trusted confidant and use that vantage point to serve your customers to the best of your abilities.

Links: The people at the *Secretan Center* have created another inspiring presentation.

Check out www.secretan.com/leading_soul.html when you want to imagine the world in its highest form.

Musings: Imagine that, as the newly appointed CEO of your corporation, you arrive at a harbour behind the helm of your fifty-foot yacht. A friendly young person welcomes you, quickly sizes up your vessel, and points you towards a moorage that appears only appropriate for a small dingy. You have never met this person before, you have never entered this harbour before, and you have never attempted the requested maneuver before. Do you throw your engines in reverse and seek out another port or do obediently follow the seemingly impossible instructions?

The answer to that question is all about confidence. Whether through the zeal of youth or years of experience, if a person is self-assured, having absolutely no doubt in their execution of a task, you are confident following their instructions. As well, if you sense that their intention is to serve you, your doubt turns to trust. Confidence coupled with an attention to service translates into action.

Within us all exists both youthful exuberance and sagely experience. These energies are not about being right and rather about knowing what is right. Tap into your source and find the confidence to serve well.

Facts & Figures:

Lloyd's List, the London based shipping industry paper, has decided to abandon the use of the pronoun "she" when referring to vessels. Instead, the gender-neutral "it" is now in use.

Lexicon: Sometimes, perfectly good words fall out of our vocabulary through lack of use. One such word is *buckshee* and it is time to revive its fortune. Meaning something extra or left over obtained for no cost, *buckshee* can be used in many places in common speech and it sounds wonderful. So next time you give something away, do not say that it is *free of charge*, say that it is *buckshee* and do your part to restore this colourful word back into the common vocabulary.