

Openings: The solar geometry has shifted enough so that daylight is now extending its reach over either end of the day. That day each year when your awareness is filled with the realisation of the lengthening day is a glorious one. The dead of winter has passed and spring is on its way.

Spotlight: One of the great gifts of all enterprises is the opportunity for conversations. Common to the many forms that enterprises take, is the provision for a conversational venue. Conversations are a part of being human and when two or more people come together, the stage is set for this essential activity. Great enterprises recognise the importance of conversations and actively foster them.

A conversation is much more than an interchange of words and a conversational environment requires more than the ability to hear what is said. There are private and public conversations as well as formal and informal conversations. The greater awareness you have of the forms of conversations taking place within your enterprise, the better able you are to support them. Not all conversations may be appropriate within the bounds of the enterprise. In defining the range of topics, be certain not to venture into the realm of restricting conversations.

Not only is limiting conversations impossible, it is counterproductive. Any attempt to suppress conversations only drives them underground where the Dickensian methodology employed becomes the main topic of discussion. That conversations are almost impossible to control is why they can evoke fear. With this one simple act beyond control, a fearful imagination can easily see the entire enterprise spinning out of control. To ease any latent fears, one can take solace in the knowledge that absolutely no gains in efficiency or effectiveness have ever been shown to accrue through people toiling in silent slavery. Most work is a shared activity and conversation lightens the load.

Accepting that conversations are a necessary and valuable aspect of your enterprise lets you focus on fostering effective conversations. Conversations require both space and time appropriate to the type of conversation taking place. The weekly meeting of the executive in a richly appointed boardroom is an example of creating the appropriate space and time for a conversation. The proverbial water cooler discussions are just as important a conversation for the well being of the enterprise and so require paying attention to creating space and time for them.

Good conversations melt the distance between people as the individuals merge into the common ground that conversation creates. On this hallowed ground, there is space to honour individuality while building consensus. In coming together through conversation, stakeholders create something greater than the sum of their individuality and in doing so, strengthen the enterprise.

Musings: Recently, I resumed pursuing my passion for photography. After several years away from this activity, it is refreshing to return to it and rediscover how it recreates me.

Photography nourishes my body, mind, and soul. With every click of the shutter, I am balancing the art, science, and spirituality of being human. A satisfying photograph is the result of composing an intriguing image in the viewfinder, calculating the correct light variables, and considering why I am drawn to capture on film that which I see. Only when there is a balance between these three aspects am I able to translate my vision into an impactful creation. While photography is expressed in a two-dimensional medium, my intention is to imbue each rendering with a multi-dimensional sensibility.

Photography gives me great joy by framing my world through a different lens. Looking up, down, and all around while being open to the possibility of the beauty that surrounds me is not taking pictures of the world; it is putting myself into the world. Each photograph is an expression of who I am.

Tools & Techniques: Backing up the information on your computer systems is primarily a safeguard against equipment failure. Once a backup is created, consideration should be given to other risks including theft, fire, and water. Locking your backup in a safe does mitigate the risk of theft and it may not reduce the other risks even if your safe is rated for fire and water. While paper will not char until 450° F (232° C), damage to computer media occurs as low as 125° F (52° C). The strategic solution is to ensure that a copy of your backup is stored at a separate location as the odds of catastrophic events occurring at two locations is very low.

Lexicon: Limiting the word *conversation* to an act of speech is a very recent development in its usage. Originally, a conversation encompassed all aspects of dealings with others. In this broader sense, a conversation is one's manner of conducting oneself in the world. This interpretation of the word is aligned with the research indicating that in a conversation, only a small portion of the information communicated is verbal. That smile on your face as you answer the telephone does make a difference.