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## Morrie Shechtman

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From: Morrie Shechtman

Subject: Monthly Newsletter



Morrie Shechtman

I recently came across a quote that caught my attention and I wanted to share it with the readers of my newsletter. It couldn't be more apropos of our times.

*"Fortunes are not made in boom times...that is merely the collection period. Fortunes are made in depressions or lean times when the wise man overhauls his mind, his methods, his resources, and gets in training for the race to come."* ~ George Wood Bacon

The quote is from an excellent article on the challenges of hospital administration – interesting – and was given to me by a good friend, Jim Oliverson, Vice President of Public Relations at our local hospital.

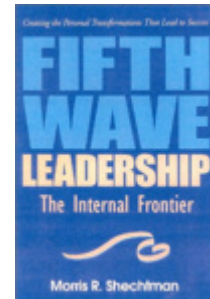
### Business Tips

#### ***Turning Frustration into Results: Anger and Higher Expectations***

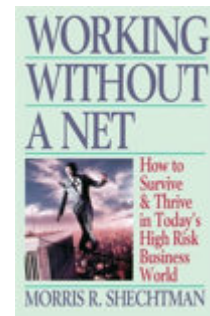
I don't know anyone running or working in a business these days who isn't somewhere on the frustration scale. What used to work, doesn't anymore; or at best, it doesn't get the results it used to. Almost everyone you talk to is interested in what you sell or provide, but now's not the right time. And nobody has a clue when this horror show of an economy will turn around. So what can you do to turn your frustration into something productive? There are three "understandings" that have helped our clients decrease frustration and increase results:

1. You need to understand the difference between *good anger* and *bad anger*.
2. You need to understand the relationship between emotional clarity and intellectual clarity.
3. You need to understand the *Trinity of Success* – Feelings translated into thoughts, which are translated into action.

Good Anger involves the expression of disappointment and the raising of expectations. Both are votes of confidence. We are only disappointed in people who we believe are capable of doing better. Likewise, we only have higher expectations for those we



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truly care about, respect, and have confidence in. An important point here about expectations. We need to expect more from people than simply an increase in activity. If you work harder and longer at what you've always done, you'll simply burn out quicker, with no increase in results. What we need to expect is an increase in self-information and conscious decision-making. Why are you doing what you're doing? What does it have to do with all the changes around you? And how do all the decisions you make, line up with what you're learning? I'm constantly amazed by how much unconscious decision-making dominates business behavior.

Bad Anger involves self-blaming, caretaking, and hostility. The biggest pitfall for successful people is the belief that they have done well because they have controlled everything in their environment. If they believe this, then struggling or failing means that they are totally at fault, and blaming themselves makes logical sense. There is a fine, but clear line, between self-analysis and self-blaming. It is the line between courage and masochism.

Caretaking occurs when expressing disappointment in others is too painful and uncomfortable for oneself. It is not only a form of self-sacrifice, but is ultimately a sacrifice of both parties. On a practical level, caretaking is the protection of people from their own choices, the demeaning of their capacities, and the destruction of their future.

Hostility involves a universal accusation from which there is no redemption. If all I tell you is that everything you do is wrong, there is nothing you can do to change. There is a big difference between telling someone that what they said to a client was inappropriate, and that every interaction they have with a client is a hopeless disaster. Without specificity, there is no hope. Without hope there is no change.

A very simple, but important point – Emotional clarity *always* precedes intellectual clarity. You do not think well if you are clueless about how you feel. I have seen more businesses ruined by emotionally confused and befuddled people, than any other single cause.

When you're clear about how you feel, you get real clear about what you can do and what you can't do; you make better decisions; you have no doubts about what you need from other people; and you have great credibility with others. These times require tough conversations and even tougher decisions. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to engage in these – with credibility and empathy – without coming from your heart, first, and your head, second.

Even as a non-Catholic, I've always been a believer in trinities. The one I've seen work best in business is: Feelings – Thoughts – Actions. In my formal education, I was taught to reverse the first two, but I never saw that work, either in academia or the real world.

Feelings come first, because that's where our values come from. Something either feels right or it doesn't. When you violate your values, your gut sends you an unmistakable message. But



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feelings, without the framework provided by our intellectual capacity, leave us no different or better off than before we recognized them. Thinking is the vehicle that organizes feelings and drives them toward action. Without action there is no way of measuring whether or not any change has occurred. The problem with most "help" in our culture is that it is devoid of any demand that people *do something* with their feelings and thoughts. Any one of these three, in isolation or in combination with only one of the other two, gets you no results, or results you wished you didn't have.

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## **Political and Cultural Observations**

### ***Fanatical Fatigue: A Pox on the Looney Left and the Righteous Right***

The more I talk with people, travel the country, and experience the various information media, the more I am convinced that the vast majority of our populous is thoroughly fatigued by political fanaticism and has had it with massive and relentless polarization. People are beginning to sense and feel that both the Left and the Right are equally nuts, and are, in fact, cut from the same cloth.

It has become clear to me that when you cut through all the propaganda and palaver, both the Left and the Right are fundamentally about *CONTROL*. Very specifically, about controlling other people's lives. You've heard about OPM, other people's money. This is about OPL, other people's lives. The Left is about removing all pain, struggles, and failure from our lives and has little or no trust in our ability to learn from our experience. The Right is about dictating personal morality and decision-making, and shares the Left's low trust in people. High control, low trust. Sounds like somebody thinks we are incapable idiots, needing constant supervision and direction. The Left loves to catastrophize and frighten people into adopting their belief system. The Right relies on shaming people into adopting their doctrine. Neither one trusts people to adapt when they feel the need to change and neither has much use for people's feelings, instincts, and intuition. It has been my experience that the vast majority of people do not wish to live in a cesspool or trash heap; they respect and value life in all its forms; they know the difference between right and wrong, good and evil; and they most assuredly realize that a lot of life is about making tough, uncomfortable, and often painful decisions.

They don't need to be intellectually terrorized into caring about the environment, nor do they need religious dogmatists to tell them what their values are. I believe that the great middle ground of America will not destroy itself (or the planet) and is perfectly capable of taking care of itself and getting the information it needs to do so. And I also believe that the great middle wants leaders who have common sense, who talk with them (and not down to them), and who trust them to be individually responsible and accountable for what they do.

Lastly, I believe that the country may be ripe and ready for a political movement that is based on some simple, but powerful set

of values that transcends the hysteria of hobby-horse issues that both the Left and the Right are currently exploiting. In my next newsletter, I'll lay out these values and talk about how we can, hopefully, move beyond the polarizing paralysis of global warming, world peace, abortion, and gay rights.

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## **Personal Notes**

### ***The Joys of a Pedestrian Life: Reconnecting with My Heritage***

One of the strange gifts of this economic meltdown is a renewed appreciation for what I have and for the comfort and predictability of the routines in my life. I have always valued the important relationships with family, friends, and clients, but I have been keenly aware of relegating the routine, pedestrian activities surrounding these relationships to a secondary role. For over thirty years, I have chosen to wrap my professional life in travel – to be gone most of the time. I have kept myself extraordinarily busy and have worked at an exhausting and breakneck pace. Sometimes I think I made the right choices; sometimes I have regrets.

I'm not so busy now. I could manufacture more things to do, but I know they would be make-work. I'm busy doing a number of things to try to create opportunities and deal with the changes brought about by the recession. But I have also come to terms, with no little struggle, with the reality that some stuff is simply out of my control. I may be smart, creative, and talented, but I'm not an alchemist. I'm struck, again and again, by the paradox of our current dilemma – we're all cutting back and we all want everyone else to spend their money on us.

So, I have more time on my hands. And I'm spending it at, or around home. Arleah and I have become real homebodies. It's a new experience for me. Most of the time I like it. Some of the time it feels weird and strange, like I should be doing something "productive."

Recently, I've been thinking about the lives of my grandparents and parents. My father's parents had hard lives. They escaped from Russia with little more than the clothes on their backs. They worked long hours in harsh conditions and considered it a privilege to do so. And when they got enough money to buy half of a two-flat, they thought they had died and gone to heaven. Nothing pleased my grandmother more than cooking a gargantuan meal, and nothing pleased my grandfather more than sitting in his modest living room watching his grandchildren play and bicker.

My father worked like a mule to put himself through school. We grew up listening to stories of his pulling a rickshaw at the 1938 World's Fair. My mother worked outside the home and was also a full-time homemaker and caretaker for her mother. When they got enough money to move out of apartments, we moved into a single family home – modest by today's standards, but a crowning

achievement for the children of immigrants. My mother has always said that she felt like a queen in that house. The whole family watching television together left my parents with an enormous feeling of pride and satisfaction. (Grandma loved wrestling – no one could convince her that it was fake.)

I've come a long way and I'm very grateful. Looking back has helped me move forward. I strongly recommend it.

Morrie

Tell us what you think – [click here](#) to send us an e-mail with your feedback.

We've had a number of requests for materials about our work. Here's the link to our online store: <http://www.fifthwaveleadership.com/store.cfm>



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