

Diving In – A New Life Lesson

Into the Unknown

My regular readers will know that I constantly seek to draw out business analogies from real life experiences. Well friends, let me tell you of an opportunity that was recently presented by way of a yuletide gift. Not for me the humdrum of socks, shirts or aftershave. Forget the tried and proven gifts of the latest best seller or that “must have” item from the hardware emporium. No, unwrapping my Christmas present revealed a gift certificate promising an experience in a large tank full of water that was home to a wide range of marine life including an ample number of sharks! What a thoughtful woman, my wife.

The day arrived and I calmly presented myself to the dive shop to await my fate. Five of us in total were kitted up and given a rudimentary introduction in the use of the equipment, what to expect once underwater and a few less than encouraging pearls of wisdom such as “don’t wave your arms about, the sharks will think it’s their snack”. Once preparations were completed we were marched, single file, to the entry point of the tank and eased into the unfamiliar marine environment.

Extremely poor planning on my part left me on an unprotected flank of our gathering of underwater interlopers. I had a sudden empathy for the fish in the holding tanks at my favourite Chinese restaurant.

“Nothing ever becomes real until it is experienced.” John Keats, A Letter to George and Georgina Keats

Note to myself; stick with the pork and noodles from now on. After some time, probably 5 or 10 minutes, I did manage to become reasonably composed and enjoy the spectacle of teaming sea life all about me and relish the sensation of existing beneath the water.

Well, what conclusions did I draw from my initial sub-aquatic adventure? First, it is pretty unnerving being up close and personal with a creature approximately twice my size. Particularly given their general reputation, perhaps undeservedly, as a predator of my species. Fear overcome (yeah right!), I had time to ponder the similarities between diving into the unfamiliar sub aqua habitat and diving into unfamiliar business situations. Yes, both took a commitment to action, followed by a leap of faith and some preparation was required for each of the activities. Perhaps there are more parallels to be thought through, but breathing from the SCUBA gear and remaining invisible took up the vast majority of my concentration.



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UNTIL IT IS EXPERIENCED**

John Keats, A Letter to George and
Georgina Keat



The Common Elements of Success

The experience came to an end and I clambering to the safety of the tank's edge. I took a moment to gain some composure and ponder my newest life experience. Doing things for the first time can be exhilarating.

Having removed the SCUBA gear, weight belts, boots and wetsuit, I once again took on the appearance and demeanour of my confident, land based self. I returned to the dive shop to pick up the photos. Inside, a poster proclaiming their professional approach caught my eye. It announced "right equipment, right training, right advice, right experience". There it was, an absolute correlation between diving with sharks and succeeding in business. These could be the elements of a successful foray into unknown entrepreneurial ventures; the components required to achieve continuing business victory.

This framework to achieving success in recreational diving leads me to realise that this may be a worthwhile approach to success in business and life generally.

This four-part combination of correct equipment, training, advice and

experience sounds like a pretty good checklist for maximising our chances of business success. So, maybe that's the secret then, simply "do it right".

Learning from The Experience

In the next few weeks I plan to test my new theory. I have been developing a keen sense of what is being done properly and what is not. So far my hypothesis seems to be holding water, so to speak. It does indeed appear to be the case that when things are done properly, success follows. Similarly short cuts, promises unkept and incorrect training and equipment emerge as the cause of a large number of failures

Maybe my time with the sharks did give me a significant life lesson, success happens when things are done properly.

In case you were wondering, yes I did have a hearty meal of fish and chips after the experience. It just seemed fitting really. I'm still not sure of the significance of the sardines I found in my board shorts when I was putting them on before the dive. Just kidding dear.

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