

The Broken Candle Response

“What type of Teaching and Training really matter?”

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When I shop, I know what I want. I walk into the store, grab my item, and walk straight to the cashier to check out.

Unfortunately, that is not my wife. She does this thing called “perusing”. It is confusing to me and often leads to me sitting on some bench, holding a purse and wondering how I got here... yet again. Unfortunately, this was my fate a couple days ago at a local shopping mall. As my wife joyfully pondered the subtle differences between light purple and lilac,

I noticed a young father with his son. The boy couldn’t have been older than seven or so, and he continually kept touching things and showing them to his father. His father gently asked him over and over to stop grabbing things and to be careful. Now, I’m no Nostradamus but I am a father of five, and I knew this was about to get entertaining.

Sure enough, the boy grabbed a colorful candle, swung around to show his father, and it slipped out of his hands and shattered on the floor.

Put yourself in the father’s shoes. How would you feel if you consistently kept warning your child, again and again, to not do something because of the ramifications, and they proceeded anyway? We all know what’s coming next, but then... it didn’t.

As expected, the child felt horrible and immediately began to cry. But there weren’t any stern scolding, or words of frustration or looks of anger.

I leaned forward in amazement as this father instead began to teach.

He knelt down by his son and hugged him. The father told him he knew it was an accident and that the son was still loved and always would be, no matter what. He then told the boy that this was the result of ignoring the repeated warnings, and it was an opportunity for the boy to learn a lesson about obedience and trust.

The boy hugged his dad again, and the father told the boy that he had to pay for the candle by doing some extra work at home—it was only fair. The son readily agreed and they were laughing and joking again in no time.

As I sat there on that bench, clutching my wife's purse, I thought about what I had just witnessed. The question came to my mind...

“What type of teaching and training really matter?”

It could have gone so differently. I imagined the opposite response and the dad getting upset to teach his son a lesson. Sure, it would have been effective in scaring the boy, but what does that teach in the long-term?

In our business, we do a lot of teaching. However, our training can be so much more effective if we focus on a simple principle so eloquently modeled by this young father.

It isn't just *what* we teach. It's *how* we teach.

I've seen a lot of social media posts from network marketers, and a majority seem to be focused on their current or potential lifestyle. They show the cars, the golf trips, the yachts, the shopping bags, the restaurants. I'm definitely not against the finer things in life, but what are these *actually* teaching?

We want to justify it and say “It is teaching goals! It’s demonstrating lifestyle! It’s helping create a why!” But that isn’t being honest to what we know is true. Deep down we know it places the emphasis on the wrong part of our business. We know it isn’t training or teaching or modeling. What does someone think the next time they see that person at a training telling everybody how hard they work when for the last 6 months their Facebook, Instagram and Snap-Chat feeds have been nothing but shopping trips and toes in the sand?

Now I’m not saying don’t enjoy the fruits of your labor. In fact, share that picture of your family in Cabo. But be sure your posts are also modeling what you want others in your organization to be doing. When they see you are up at 5 am checking in on your team, or giving tips, or conducting training, or recognizing the accomplishments of team members – in other words when they see you are creating value... NOW you are training. Others see that and say “Oh! *That’s* what she meant in the last training. That is what it should feel like. Now I understand.”

All of the best trainers and teachers I know have become effective because they connect with others authentically. Are you showing only your best self to promote a false sense of self-worth, or are you being true to who you genuinely are in an effort to lead others toward success?

That young father got down on his knees and modeled what it means to love and respect a family member. He modeled responsibility when he paid for the broken candle and taught responsibility when he required his son to work off the debt. His teaching was effective because he taught by example.

The second principle of training we can learn from this father is that in order to effectively teach people we have to embrace mistakes.

Often, I have seen trainers give up on someone in their organization when they fail to produce. Or from the other side, I have seen many new network marketers give up after a disastrous invite or a difficult series of months.

As teachers and trainers, we must embrace mistakes. Let me say that again. We must *embrace* mistakes. We must revel in what they teach us and the chance to learn what not to do next time. I recently heard John Maxwell say it this way “I celebrate my successes but I contemplate my mistakes”. Mistakes mean we are growing. We need to be analytical and clear in our diagnosis (just as this young father pointed out to his son that this was the result of not heeding his father’s warnings) so that when we stand right back up we can put this new diagnosis to work.

When we train, do we consistently ask for and analyze mistakes? Do we take the time to learn from them and provide constructive feedback about what we can do next time? Do we teach others to expect and welcome problems? If not, we should; because the alternative is fear of making a mistake. And we have all seen the paralysis that fear inevitably creates.

In our field, we are all teachers. We all have the power to help others along their journey.

I hope we can teach others the same way that young father taught me as I sat on a cold bench clutching my wife’s purse. Because heaven knows, it won’t be the last time I find myself there.



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