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A Guide to Good Service



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Motto

“Let your work be right for you and not the other way round.”

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS
16th century

We could leave the motto of this book without a comment and not write anything else. However, I am trying to organize my thoughts, for myself and for all those who feel they are walking the path of their calling, those born with a gift for being of service to other people.

Introduction

Before you decide to start a job or continue with it, ask yourself and answer a few questions to check if you are able to serve people well and to find out what meaning that job has for you. Apart from my suggestions there is also room for your own questions in the list below.

Both professional and beginning practitioners of the art of customer service ask themselves those questions. An art? Yes, an art. I believe that good service is an art.

1. Do you feel that your work gives you great satisfaction?
2. Is it easy for you to fulfill your professional duties?
3. Do you feel that people like your company?
4. Do you enjoy being with people?
5. Can you imagine doing what you now do for a living for many years to come?
6. Can you get through difficult times at work?
7.
8.
9.
10.

If you feel that your job is perfect for you, let us move to subsequent chapters.

FORGET STEREOTYPES

The first chapter describes a new approach to the art of selling and of helping others.

1. Forget profit, money, turnover, limits, calculations...
2. Forget the word 'client'.
3. Forget competition, rat races, comparisons...
4. Forget the concept of 'sale'.
5. Forget compliments.

REMEMBER TO CREATE A GOOD ATMOSPHERE

This chapter contains advice which should never be forgotten by any professional sales assistant.

1. Remember to make the other person feel good in your company and, thus, to make the meeting memorable.
2. Remember to get to know the other person's needs.
3. Remember to offer products with a clear conscience.
4. Remember to select a product which will be of good service to the user in the future.
5. Remember to express as many feelings as possible.

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT

This chapter is devoted to the power of our thoughts.

1. Believe in the power of thoughts.
2. Believe that dreams come true!
3. Believe that your thoughts have an influence on the quality of your work!
4. Believe and be trustful.

TRY TO LEARN ALL THE TIME

This chapter is about education. I will be trying to prove that learning is a lifelong affair. It never ends. What one has learned so far will not suffice in the future.

1. We should try to learn all the time.
2. Try to follow good models from different places.
3. Try to observe yourself.
4. Try not to be self-conscious during a conversation.
5. Try to empathize with the others.
6. Try to be moderate and adapt your behavior to the situation.
7. Try to derive satisfaction from another person's joy.

READY? STEADY...

In this chapter I talk about the first impression we make when meeting people.

1. Be careful not to be late.
2. Pay attention to your looks.
3. Pay attention to the way you speak.
4. Pay attention to the way you move.

5. Pay attention to the way you present things.
6. Be careful not to get stuck in a rut.
7. Beware of a mess.

DO NOT BE AFRAID

This chapter contains advice for people who fear being open with others.

1. Do not fear. Ask questions!
2. Do not fear. Give honest answers.
3. Please, remember!
4. Be brave and take initiative.

FACE CHALLENGES!

You should be resistant to all kinds of hardships.

1. Face challenges.
2. Face boredom.
3. Face laziness.
4. Face failures.
5. Face impatience.

EXUDE JOY!

This chapter tells about enthusiasm and passion.

1. Express genuine interest in others.
2. Show how competent you are.
3. Show your passion.
4. Show your joy of life.
5. Show your enthusiasm.

END WELL!

In this chapter I discuss the last impression we make on others.

1. What does it mean to end well?
2. Let the closure become an invitation.

EPILOG

Forget stereotypes

1. FORGET PROFIT, MONEY, TURNOVER, LIMITS, CALCULATIONS...

Why should we forget basic economic laws?

Is it even possible? Does it make any sense?

If we are passionate about our work, then, definitely, YES, it is possible!!! If work is our priority, then, definitely, YES, it makes sense!!! If it is our goal to serve others as well as we can, then, definitely, YES, we can do that!!!

I do realize that it is hard not to think about people's basic needs, the needs we meet with the use of money. We want to earn a living for our families and ourselves. We think about food and accommodation, items necessary for daily life, without which we cannot function. We think about things which make our life easier, such as a car or other mechanic and electronic equipment, or about those which make our life more pleasant, such as entertainment or journeys. And we should be thinking about them! Our work should allow us to have those things. However, a house, a car, or holidays cannot become the main aim of our work. At work we should focus solely on excellence. Results will come by themselves.

At this point I remember the story of three builders. There were three men doing the same job. A passerby asked each of them what they were doing. The first man answered that he was constructing a wall, with great effort. The second one – that he was working his hands to the bone to earn bread for his family. The third one replied that he was raising a cathedral. They probably all received similar remuneration but only one of them was smiling. It is not hard to guess which one. That builder was creating a work. He was the only one who did not associate work with hardships in his answer. He gained the most from his work.

I can assure you that if there was an audience observing the work of the three builders for a certain amount of time, the attention of all viewers would be drawn to him. A person in the process of creation speaks, looks, and moves in a different way. A creator exudes energy which attracts others. This is why some actors attract viewers from all over the world, while others remain obscure.

People can feel if someone's behavior is natural. We quickly recognize those who only want to sell, earn, and forget. We seek people who care for us, who want good for us, who are honest and genuine.

We should forget limits, calculations, and the laws of economy. Let us consider them as important but of lower priority. Our principal goal is the best possible service to people.

2. FORGET THE WORD 'CLIENT'.

Why should we forget that word? Why look for new names? Does it make any sense?

My answer is an emphatic 'yes' – it does make sense!

It is far better to use the word 'PERSON'! It is better to think and say a woman, a man, a youth, an elderly lady! I have noticed that when we care for someone, when we have got to know someone better, or when someone attracts our attention we never call that person a client. We begin to use that person's name. We say Mary, Ms Taylor, Mr. Brown. When we do not know the people's names yet, we give them pseudonyms related to the specific features of their looks, character, or behavior. We say: the woman with a dog, Stephen's mother, or the jodhpur boots man. We also change our attitude toward them.

I am convinced that when we do not know a person yet we should not call him or her a client, either. In the first place, we should think about everyone as a person.

I associate the word 'clients' with anonymous people, "the people who are yet to find out that they have our money". That anonymity and such an attitude toward others is the subject of sales trainers' favorite joke. At the beginning of a training they like to ask the trainees who a client is. After a while and a few attempts at an answer they explain: "a client is a person who is yet to find out that he has our money. Ha, ha, ha!"

Can we think of a person in that way? No, we cannot.

When we think of a person, we do it in the categories which we also apply to ourselves. We can understand another person's needs more readily when we view them through the lens of our own needs. Do we think of ourselves as CLIENTS? Do we want to be thought of as CLIENTS? Never! Well, maybe when we make a complaint or look down on a shop assistant. I am a client! We do that when we want to dominate someone, gain an advantage or a benefit. Would we think of ourselves as a person first in such circumstances?

Let us treat people the way we would want to be treated. Let us talk to them the way we would want to be spoken to and serve them the way we would like to be served. Let us think about them the way we wish to be thought about. Let us think in the category of a person!

3. FORGET COMPETITION, RAT RACES, COMPARISONS...

Forget competition? Is that possible in the era of free-market capitalism, competition, and ruthless rivalry? Is that possible at a time when everyone craves a place on the podium, the highest one? Is it possible? Yes, it is, you should only find your own pace and stop comparing yourself with others.

When I was young, I used to run a lot. I wanted to be in good shape. I admit that I never really liked that kind of exercise. Years later I discovered walking. I dream of long walks. I love being tired after a long march. I believe I am in quite a good shape.

I have gained it at a specific pace. My own pace. A pace within my range. I feel similar to a person who loves running and gets in shape that way. I also feel similar to a person who loves sitting on a beach by the sea and takes care of his or her health that way.

Can a walker compete in a race with a runner? Can a person sitting on a beach win a race against a person who walks? What for? Let us find a pace for ourselves instead of fighting with other people. Let us battle with ourselves and combat our own weaknesses.

Let us not participate in a race but go our own way. Let us not compare ourselves with others. We had better create our own style.

4. FORGET THE CONCEPT OF 'SALE'.

Forget the sales? But how? After all, this is what we are about.

But it is simple. Do not sell! Be of service to others!

Try to help people make a choice, in a broad understanding of the term. Try to help them select the color: black or brown, the size: 37 or 38, the style: fashionable or classical. Also, try to help them make the basic decision: whether to make the purchase or not. If we want to offer really great services we cannot put the cart before the horse. Selling is the final element of the process.

A few years into my selling career a well-known architect with two friends came to one of our shops. She was a decisive person who did not hesitate to make a choice. However, that day it was one of her friends who wanted to buy something. Having determined and found an appropriate model and color, we had to select the size. 38 was a bit too loose, 37 – too tight. We were not able to find 37.5 in any of the shops. The woman liked the design so much that she thought of buying the tight shoes, disregarding comfort. At that point, she would not look at other models. We all know that in such cases it is best to look for a

different design. We also know the saying that there is nothing worse than wearing a shoe that is too small. I tried, delicately, to talk her out of it. In vain. After a while, the architect turned to her friend and remarked: "Do you know why I like this company so much and buy here so often? It is because, so far, nobody has tried to push anything on me here." That argument worked. We deferred the shopping.

Let us not back away from taking responsibility. Tell people the truth and try to help them make good decisions. We should not be afraid to dissuade them from making the wrong ones. Still, let us not be overeager. In the end, the decision belongs to the one who is served. Our advice could be wrong. For example, I might like wearing shoes with a loose fit but that does not mean everyone does. I have met people who wear shoes tight enough to be felt on the foot. Let us assume responsibility. We should devote as much time to people as they need. A hasty and messy end of a conversation can make it the last one with that person.

Honesty and integrity bring good results. They are the best long-term investment.

5. FORGET COMPLIMENTS.

Forget praises? But we love them so much.

We should try to do our best at work, not to be lauded for our 'greatness' but in pursuit of excellence. Experience has taught me many times that whenever I want to show off my shop assistant's skills I do not manage to provide good service to the person. I probably seem very unnatural when trying too hard and people can feel it immediately.

I have once heard an interesting conversation on the radio. The host complimented his guest's integrity. He praised the man for his ethics and remaining true to his ideals at a time when many people sold them out for a seemingly comfortable life. The host presented the man, rightly so, as a role model and called him a hero of our times.

The man modestly listened to the compliments and, smiling, stated that he did not deserve the praises and that honesty was everyone's natural duty. He added that it would be hard for him to behave otherwise and asked if normal behavior really deserved such praises. Is decency a sufficient reason for great renown? When a shoemaker makes good shoes, do we call him a hero? Do we award a Nobel Prize to a physician who gives a correct diagnosis? Should a journalist who has carried out a good interview be put on a pedestal? Are parents taking care of their children doing something extraordinary? The guest of the radio show believed conscientious discharge of one's duty to be a norm. He did not expect compliments for it. He presumed that we must be seeing too many bad examples if we are ready to view meeting our basic human responsibilities as heroism.

We should be honest, reliable, and creative at work, regardless of compliments. A positive attitude should be a norm, a core principle.

Remember to create a good atmosphere

1. REMEMBER TO MAKE THE OTHER PERSON FEEL GOOD IN YOUR COMPANY AND, THUS, TO MAKE THE MEETING MEMORABLE.

How can we achieve that?

Have you ever walked out of a cinema not remembering the plot of the film you have just watched for over an hour? Sometimes after a moment or two we cannot even remember the heroes. After a week we forget we have ever seen the film.

Have you ever stopped reading a book in the middle and never resumed? Sometimes we forget a book very quickly. Are there any places you have no intention of revisiting? How fast did you stop thinking about them? Have you ever met people you have never tried to meet again?

Surely, we have all had such experiences: watching an uninspiring film, reading a baffling book, visiting a place we did not like for some reason, being disappointed in someone. Generally, sometimes we do not feel a special atmosphere which would make the place, person, or thing memorable.

Have you ever watched a particularly gripping film? Do you often recall it? Can you picture the actors' faces and the small details in your mind? Have you ever been engulfed in a book, not being able to put it down until morning? Have you ever been changed by the contents of a book? Are there any places to which you often return? Are there any people around whom you love being, people you love talking to?

For all of us there is such a film, a book, a place, and, especially, a person. Let us think what makes a particular situation so special to us? Why do we think about it so often? Let us answer those questions and do what we can to make our contacts with people special and unforgettable.

Some time ago a well-known artist visited our shop. We made every effort to provide great service to him. We devoted as much time to him as was required. We paid attention to every detail and found appropriate products. Our colleague who was attending to him had a great time. He thanked us and expressed his satisfaction because he also liked it at our shop. Our colleague reflected on one little thing. She had the

impression that the artist might have thought that the good treatment was only due to his being famous. He might have wondered if we treated each customer with the same degree of care. Such an impression would have been wrong because, as I know very well, our colleague always strives to reach out to people in the same way, regardless of their social status.

Let us try to see great artists in all people and offer everyone the same services we would offer a popular singer. Let us try to endow all our meetings with a special atmosphere which will be missed and make people want to relive it.

2. REMEMBER TO GET TO KNOW THE OTHER PERSON'S NEEDS.

In order to get to know another person's needs one should study psychology or at least be sensitive and empathetic to others. It is a very broad topic, worthy of psychological studies. In this guide let us approach it from the point of view of sensitivity.

We should remember not to generalize anything in life. Each person is a great personality and, therefore, requires an individual approach.

Two eighteen-year-old girls may have completely disparate needs. One could be fascinated by discotheques and the other one by scouting. Two elderly men of a similar age could be keen on as different activities as angling and dances. Very often people's needs do not depend on their age and sex but on their character and emotional state.

Why do I believe that having sensitivity is enough for recognizing another person's needs? Sensitivity is a combination of honesty and delicacy, complemented by the disinterested desire to help others. If we approach other people in such a spirit, they will inform us about all their needs themselves. No effort will be necessary on our part. Sensibility to people's needs allows us to connect with them more fully.

Those needs can be material, related to the possession of particular objects, and immaterial, related to feelings.

There are many kinds of material needs. One person will be looking for laces, another for shoe polish, and another for several pairs of shoes. The needs depend on many factors. However, when it comes to immaterial needs, they are similar for all people. Everyone needs a smile, a kind word, good treatment, genuine interest, honest advice, and respect, and everyone loves sharing passion and joy.

One day we were visited by a man with a bundle. This is how we called him because anyone who loved fairy tales in childhood has in their mind the image of an old wanderer carrying a bundle on a stick. To be honest, the man looked as if taken out of a fairy tale, he was tall, thin, and he stooped a little. He seemed almost unreal against the background of the huge city.

From the very beginning he made the impression of being out of this world. Had we judged him by that first impression, we might have inferred that he was coming to us for financial support. Unconsciously, though, I treated him very seriously, showing respect and genuine interest. What turned out was that the man did not visit our shop by accident and did not come to beg for money. He visited us to buy sandals. It ought to be remembered that our products are not the most affordable.

The elderly man turned out to be very sociable and merry. We had a great time but I still had my doubts. We are all deeply imbued with stereotypes. Until the last moment I was wondering if he understood the price correctly. I was afraid he would be disappointed at the counter when he realized there was one more zero on the price tag. After all, such situations had taken place in the past, with people who looked rich. And? Nothing like that happened. He understood the price correctly and, having bought the shoes, noted: "The right person in the right place". Coming from him it sounded like the greatest compliment. I felt very good.

It looked like I had satisfied two kinds of the man's needs: a material one as he was looking for comfortable shoes for his travels and an immaterial one as he needed respect and a kind word. I believe the second need was dominant in that case. I believe that he also felt good.

That is a proof that empathy can go a long way when it comes to learning about people's needs.

3. REMEMBER TO OFFER PRODUCTS WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

Why is it so important to approach people with a clear conscience and good intentions?

Have you ever offered someone a product without informing that person about all its advantages? The answer seems simple. Everyone gives information about as many advantages as possible, with great conviction. If we omit an advantage it is only because it has temporarily escaped our mind.

Have you ever consciously omitted the disadvantages of a product? What a horrible feeling! Especially when the person we have been talking to buys the thing.

Trust the experience of many people. It is better for both partners if all the strong and weak points of a product are revealed and the future user is informed about all its important aspects.

When we buy a used car we always only hear about the advantages and never about the disadvantages. Is that fair? Are the sellers' intentions right? When we find out the weak points, will we not curse the seller? Will our grievances not be justified? Will we ever visit that person again to buy anything? Do we feel like seeing him or her again? We will all have similar answers to those questions.

I believe that good intentions are the foundation of good service. That includes finding a product which will be of good use to the recipient long after the purchase. While I was writing those words I had a phone call and was informed that the linings used in a very good model of sandals do not have the same properties as in the previous batch. Although that model sold very well last year and we have every reason to expect it would continue to sell well this year, I decided to withdraw it from sale. People who would buy that model would feel dissatisfied.

We will suffer a short-term financial loss but we will not lose the trust of people who buy our shoes. We will not give rise to just complaints. We will find sandals which will last long and be of good use.

We know that profit should not be the only criterion of choice. First of all, we should have in mind people's happiness. We should choose a product which will satisfy the person for whom we are selecting it.

If we know that the lining of a shoe does not meet our expectations, can we sell the shoes? NO, WE CANNOT! Could we sell them with a clear conscience? Could we sell them with good intentions? No, we could not. This is why we cannot offer them to people who trust us. You cannot buy trust for money. You have to work for it. That requires time. On the other hand, we can quickly undermine someone's trust or even lose it. One mistake is enough.

4. REMEMBER TO SELECT A PRODUCT WHICH WILL BE OF GOOD SERVICE TO THE USER.

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This chapter is strictly interrelated with the previous one. I would now like to extend its scope by looking into the future. I believe it is very important to select products on the basis of how likely they are to be of long-term, good use to the person who gets them.

For that purpose we should always listen to what that person expects. We should imagine the future situation in which the person will be using the product and give an honest answer to the question: "Will that thing be right for that purpose?" If we are not sure about that, we should continue our search. If there are no doubts, we ought to assure that person that the choice is right.

The most important thing is to learn what people need. We should listen carefully to what they are saying but also draw on our own experiences. We should avoid generalizing and getting stuck in a rut.

If a student asks us for elegant shoes we can surely guess that he will also wear them on everyday occasions. A student usually walks a lot and is very active, changes lecture rooms and travels by bus. Therefore, we should look for a product made of smooth leather on, a rubber sole, with an elegant finish. Durability and functionality are key features. Such a product will surely meet the expectations.

If a president of a company asks for elegant shoes, we should listen to his or her expectations and imagine the places where the shoes will be used as well as the means of transport. The shoes would probably be used in offices and in good cars. We should choose shoes made of delicate leather, with a leather sole, putting emphasis on their looks and comfort.

If we think of the future good use, we will serve the person better.

5. REMEMBER TO EXPRESS AS MANY FEELINGS AS POSSIBLE.

Positive feelings and thoughts form the basis of our good relationships. A wrong attitude and hateful feelings will only bring about trouble. We should remove them from our head and life immediately! Let us forget about them! Bad thoughts poison us with hatred which is very difficult to get rid of. We should foster good thoughts.

Do you remember a situation in which the stress related with work and duties went away? When anger and hate wore off? When we could forgive everything? When we shook hands to agree and looked one another in the eye? When we enjoyed company, being together? At such moments we all become better and can look at the world and people in a different way. Now try to remember a moment when ordinary things become extraordinary. We can all feel it on Christmas Eve.

We change for one day in the year. Change? Or maybe that is our true nature? This is what I believe. We are different on all the other days of the year. Could we not do something to have that Christmas Eve feeling more often than once a year?

Let us try harder to think well of people, to forgive their mistakes and imperfections. Let us not give our relatives cause to worry. Let us not burden other people with our problems. Let us see our own faults first. Let us never harbor grievances against other people and the world. Let us see the colors of the world and begin to change the world by changing ourselves.

Each time we attend to someone we should think well about that person and express good feelings. Good thoughts will turn into good words and good deeds. When we treat people well, we give them a piece of ourselves. When we think well of them, we give them positive energy. That energy works miracles. It helps people achieve great things and become better. It helps us overcome our weaknesses.

And the most amazing thing is that the good energy comes back.

When we think well about people we give them more than we can imagine, something immeasurable and priceless which makes life wonderful. Good thoughts also change us. The more good thoughts and feelings we give, the more we receive. Still, it is crucial to think well of others without expecting anything in return.

If we manage to achieve that state, we will undergo an amazing transformation. That transformation will attract people and their good feelings to us, like a magnet. Remember how good people close to us feel when we think well about them. How helpful it is when we do that. Let us start today!

Think about what you think about

This chapter is devoted to the power of our thoughts.

1. BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF THOUGHTS.

Be careful about your thoughts. Our thoughts are a form of energy which does not simply disappear! Today we scientists are already able to measure the emotional aspect of our thoughts. They have tools to read the thoughts with which we react to stimuli. It is possible to measure if we react with positive interest, indifference, or negative emotions. It may seem incredible but that is the first step toward mind reading. Mind reading will soon be possible.

When we realize that, we can no longer afford negative thinking. I do not mean that we should be careful because someone might read our thoughts. Rather, I believe that good thoughts create good outcomes and negative ones lead to bad results. Thoughts should be carefully selected and the bad ones ought to be immediately discarded. We should develop the good ones.

Since the time I realized the power of thoughts I have been careful about what I read, watch, and even talk about. You become what you think about!

You cannot control yourself all the time, off course. Instead, I try to be mindful of what I think about. It is hard to only have lofty ideas; our mind also needs rest. Constant focus on one thought may be destructive. Let us imagine for a moment that we are already able to read other people's minds. Which thoughts would we allow ourselves to think if we knew that? Imagine that your boss knows what you think. Would you still play with your thoughts?

2. BELIEVE ME, DREAMS COME TRUE.

Have you ever witnessed your dream come true? It is a wonderful feeling when a thing which used to be just a dream is becoming a reality. Life is worth living for such moments. They give it a meaning.

We should dream, about good things, noble actions, a happy family, true friends, and love.

I like talking with people about their dreams. People all over the world dream about the same things. Despite cultural differences, various traditions and behaviors, dreams are the same. It does not matter when a person was born and what color their skin is. Girls from Malaysia dream of romantic meetings with boys with whom they could share their lives. Young men from Thailand or Singapore do their best to earn a living for their families. Chinese women want to raise their children with love. Young Spaniards and Italians dream of achievements at work and in sports. They dream of feasting together, at tables set with delicious meals and gourmet wine. Australians and New Zealanders miss their wives and want to travel with them. Japanese people dream of eating Kobe beef which is said to be the most expensive and supposedly the best beef in the world. Russians love their romantic songs and dream of singing them with friends. Ethiopians dream of cradling their kids in their arms and being greatly loved by them. Omanis dream of family holidays, being together and having meals which taste like at no other time of the year. People from India want to live in dignity. A Venezuelan woman misses her homeland and cannot imagine a different place to live. She dreams of her children living happily, in peace, and being raised in her beautiful country. An Egyptian wants to travel around the world. An Iranian wants respect for the Iranian nation. Are those not our dreams as well? Do we not think in a similar way? Or even the same way? Do we not want to live and act in that manner?

We all dream of doing something good for mankind. Each of us wants to find the truth about the world around us and about ourselves.

When you have people's trust and talk with them openly, seriously, and without unnecessary embarrassment, you get the following reply to the question about their greatest dreams: "I dream of love, truth, good people, happiness." A girl from Malaysia and a man from Singapore will both give that answer. A Muslim, a Jew, a Hindu, a Buddhist, and a Christian will all answer in the same way.

People who define themselves as atheists will also say that. Their reply is the commandment of love. People's desires are universal.

Dreams come true. We have to believe they will be fulfilled. We need to have good intentions.

3. BELIEVE THAT YOUR THOUGHTS HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON THE QUALITY OF YOUR WORK!

Let us just remember a day at work when our thoughts were revolving around an unrelated topic. When we are at work and think about a family situation, personal matters, or troubles, we are physically present but our mind is somewhere else. We will definitely not be able to properly do our job then. To offer good service, we need to be present in the moment. We have to be engaged with our body and mind.

Still, the most important thing at work is what we think about it. I know people who are ashamed of their job. They feel embarrassed in front of their families or friends because of being salespeople. What kind of work is that? A cousin works as a clerk and another one is a lecturer at a university. They are respected by their families. And I – I am just a poor sales assistant. A loser. I also know sales assistants who are indifferent to their work. They treat it as temporary. They are looking for something else and believe they deserve a more ambitious and prestigious job. Luckily, I also know those who are proud of their job. They love what they do and realize their potential in it.

Let me not talk about those who are ashamed of what they do. The people who are indifferent to their jobs will not hold them long. Those who are proud of their work get far. The farthest. When we feel proud of what we do we usually do it very well.

We can be proud to be sales assistants! Really. We can proudly sell shoes, furniture, cars, milk, and fish. Yes, we can! And, fortunately, people who take pride in their work find their calling, accept and realize it in their lives. May we meet them as often as possible! Feel proud to be sales assistants! If you do not feel that way, look for a different job!

4. BELIEVE AND BE TRUSTFUL.

Believe in your vocation! When you feel that a job is perfect for you, engage in it fully and trust that you will find professional and personal satisfaction. Many people will be grateful to you for what you do and, especially, for how you do that. Consistency is crucial in matters of education and development. It is a long-term investment. In order to reach a high level of professional development we have to be talented, work hard, be determined, and devote enough time to it.

Some of us have known what they wanted to do in life since childhood. They are outstanding individuals, frequently geniuses in their fields. Other people discover what they are good at when they are in their teens. That is also great. I also know people who discovered their talents when they were mature. It is never too late! When I talked with them about it they told me it was only when they found their calling that they felt truly happy. They felt that life had a meaning. They could realize their potential.

In order to develop one's talent and fulfill one's calling we should give as much as possible but also allow our talent to lead us, to develop, and bloom. It is a complex process which requires a merger and cooperation of two forces, our own positive energy and that of the Giver of the talent.

Try to learn all the time

1. CONTINUE TO LEARN.

We all know one has to learn all life long. If we decide it is enough, we will make a serious mistake. Every day should provide us with a new lesson. Every day we should understand something new or gain a better understanding of what we already know. I often remember Professor Tischner's words: "a person should be changing into a personality". A person should gain good qualities which will give shape to his or her character. That is a process which lasts all our life.

Every day we should attempt to learn something new and draw positive conclusions from it. That is the best lesson for us. Life is the best school. We should read, go to the theater, watch films as often as possible. We should select items from the cultural offer on the basis of what values and messages they represent. We should talk about difficult topics and participate in worthy actions.

Once, at the beginning of my cooperation with a large shopping center, I resisted signing up for a sales course. The head, Anne Kare Sevik, then asked me: "Piotr, do you know everything by now, can you do everything?" I was ashamed when asked that question. I signed up for the course. Now I ask myself: "Do I know everything now?"

We should ask ourselves that question when we do not feel like broadening our horizons. Let us never cease learning and educating ourselves so we can become a personality and shape our character.

2. TRY TO FOLLOW GOOD MODELS FROM DIFFERENT PLACES.

A thing you liked about service at a car mechanic's or in a bar might turn out to be useful in a shoe shop.

I must admit that I have benefitted a lot from observing the Delicja restaurant in Poznań and its owner, Przemysław Wawrzyniak. What I enjoy the most about that restaurant is the warm welcome. I am also impressed by their knowledge about dishes and wines. The waiters know where the lamb comes from, when the gilt-head bream arrived and how it was transported. It gives me great pleasure to learn how the cook prepares sorbet.

Another such place is a fish restaurant in Dolo near Venice. It represents a higher level of initiation into cooking. It is called Willa Getzen and does not have a menu. It only serves the freshest and best food. It guarantees that we will eat dishes prepared a moment before, from produce delivered that morning.

Let me now speak of Polish waters and Miroslaw Kukulka, a specialist life guard. He has taught me endurance, humility, and how to arrive at a destination. My wife, Anita, teaches me how to be efficient at work, day after day. What takes others hours to do, she manages to accomplish in just a few minutes. Marek Kamiński, a traveler, writer, philosopher, and philanthropist proves that nothing is impossible. He has demonstrated to us that honest intentions help us reach even the most unattainable goals. He has reached, completely on his own, both poles. Krzysztof Niedałtowski, an artists' priest, teaches how to respect different opinions, express our thoughts, and wisely reach out to people. Pope John Paul II, the greatest authority figure of our times, showed us how to manage various bodily dysfunctions. Although he moved and talked with great difficulty, he made daily attempts to improve the world. He remained very active, as if he were a young and healthy boy. He taught us that the most important personal characteristics were strength, cheerfulness, joy, and purity of spirit. He showed us how to perceive the world and fellow human beings. He instructed us on how to live and die.

We can greet people in a shoe shop in the same way guests are welcomed in the Delicja restaurant. We can talk about shoes like they do about lamb or gilt-head bream. We can recommend to our acquaintances the best and most fashionable things, the way it is done in the Dolo restaurant. We can work as efficiently as Anita. We can be as successful in reaching our goals as Marek Kamiński. We can become as persevering as Miroslaw Kukulka and as tolerant and understanding as Krzysztof Niedałtowski. Just like Pope John Paul II, we can change the world for the better!

We can build our personality by learning from other people! We can find our style, getting inspiration from those who are more experienced.

When you see or feel something positive in a place or in other people, try to apply that thing to your work and your life. It is a very effective method of learning good things.

3. TRY TO OBSERVE YOURSELF.

Constant education requires continual verification. We should subject ourselves to exams. A word on the side of caution: we should not do that while we are providing services to someone but only after we have finished. In the next point I will explain how not to be self-conscious.

Having finished attending to a person, from time to time we should conduct a self-analysis. What have we done well and where is there room for improvement? In the future we should try to eliminate the weak elements, while trying to augment and develop the strong ones. Sometimes the person we will be attending to will become the examiner. Satisfaction on his or her face will constitute a positive grade. Additional compliments will mean a good grade. A thank you is a very good grade.

Do not hesitate to ask colleagues from work for their opinions. It is not easy to notice our own mistakes and imperfections. We get so used to them that they hardly bother us at all. We can compare it to a situation in which we smell something unpleasant. For example, when I first went to the fishing harbor I noticed the unpleasant, almost nauseating smell. After an hour on a fishing boat I became oblivious of the stench. Does that mean it had disappeared? No, it was just that my olfactory receptors no longer reacted to it.

It is similar with our mistakes. We just stop noticing them. That is why we should subject ourselves to criticism. Criticism, not overcriticism. Overcriticism is giving unfounded negative opinions, especially without offering any ideas for improvement. If we are about to overcriticize it is better not to say a word. Criticism is giving an honest opinion, together with an idea on how to improve. Such criticism is beneficial to us and others. It inspires us to look for good models, is constructive and creative.

4. TRY NOT TO BE SELF-CONSCIOUS DURING A CONVERSATION.

In the previous chapter I discussed self-possession and the importance of subjecting ourselves to external criticism. Now I will attempt to prove that it is unwise to be self-conscious while attending to someone. I do not mean that we should not think what we say. On the contrary, we should.

After one of our meetings devoted to NLP [1] I began working intensely on applying E-Prime in my life [2]. I wanted to eliminate the word 'be' from my vocabulary and replace it with other verbs. My whole energy went into not using the words 'is', 'was', 'will be'. I suspect I must have sounded very unnatural during conversations. Trying to control my speech, I made very long breaks in the middle of my sentences, to find substitutes for the verb 'be'. It was a mistake. Much later I realized that controlling oneself while attending to someone is very distracting. It halts us!

I realized that my whole attention should be focused on expressing myself clearly and being understood by my interlocutor and not on the use of the verb 'be'. Positive effects come when we just speak honestly and are fully engaged. My new approach yielded far better results than the couple of months spent introducing E-Prime time to my conversations.

5. TRY TO EMPATHIZE WITH THE OTHERS.

In order to select a suitable product one has to, proverbially, put oneself into the other person's shoes.

Once more, I would like to share an experience with you. Some time ago I was not feeling well and I was attending to an elderly woman. I had an ache in my lower spine so bending down was very difficult. The pain paralyzed my right foot. For a time, my indisposition put me in an elderly, ailing person's shoes. This is why I made every effort to select such a shoe for that woman as would not require bending down too

much when putting it on and as would be wide enough to comfortably sit on a sore foot. I believe that my personal experience helped me select the right product for her. I knew that comfort was essential in that case.

Once, I also attended to a young woman while feeling very well. A young woman prioritizes good looks, being fashionable and noticed. As I was selecting shoes for her I recollected a pleasant party and the beautifully dressed women there. An image in our mind can be extremely helpful. I knew what the girl needed, what to offer, and how to do that. I knew she needed high-heeled shoes in which her calves would look very slim, with an elongated tips, so fashionable that season.

When we can feel what the people we are attending to feel, we can understand them much better. It helps us answer their needs.

6. TRY TO BE MODERATE AND ADAPT YOUR BEHAVIOR TO THE SITUATION.

Moderation and proportions are very important words. Let us think about situations in our life in which we can discover the significance of those concepts, understand their weight.

For example, have you ever eaten too much? Do you remember how you felt that day or the next day? Your organism had to deal with more food than it needed at that moment. Nightmarish. Have you ever abused alcohol? A hangover is just as awful as the stomach pain after overeating. Our poisoned organism is telling us we have crossed certain boundaries which should not be crossed. It is easy to understand the value of moderation with respect to eating and drinking.

Have you ever oversalted a dish? Or maybe you have added too little salt into it? Perhaps you have fried tenderloin for too long? Just try to fry cod too hastily, to overcook pasta, or to undercook rice. None of those dishes would be edible as the proportions would not be right. If a dish is to taste well, it is essential to fry or cook it for an appropriate amount of time and take care that the proportions of the ingredients are right.

There are many analogous situations in our lives. We often talk too much, sleep too long, spend too much time in front of a TV. We do not devote enough time to learning. We hold grievances for too long. We abuse many substances and forget the right proportions in many matters.

How does that relate to attending to a person? We can draw an analogy between offering good service and preparing an amazing dish. In both cases, we have to add just the right amount of everything. We have to welcome people properly, present ourselves appropriately, say interesting things and be a good listener, help make the choice, and invite our guests to visit us again.

The best dishes I have eaten in my life had ingredients in the right proportions and were seasoned with their creators' positive attitude. Such a mixture will always make our meetings unique.

7. TRY TO DERIVE SATISFACTION FROM ANOTHER PERSON'S JOY.

If we try our best to be professional I can guarantee that the visitor will be satisfied with the service.

Seeing a person happy thanks to our modest efforts is one of the most pleasant moments in our work. Whoever has children, knows that wonderful feeling we have when a child laughs heartily and freely. Personally I cannot think of a better feeling. The laughter is so natural and joyful. It is exceptional and wonderful.

We can derive a similar satisfaction from watching a person who is happy with the service. Such joys gives wings. It motivates us to provide even better service and proves that our work is meaningful.

Try to remember a day at work which started with a person who was happy with your services. Do you also remember the next person you attended to? The good feelings from the first meeting carry over to the next one and the conversation is so open and free. We advise honestly and make people satisfied. We can be sure, then, that the product we help to select will fulfill people's expectations.

Another person's satisfaction is the greatest reward for our work.

Ready? Steady...

1. BE CAREFUL NOT TO BE LATE.

It is of utmost importance to begin well. A recent event has shown me that one unguarded moment is enough to cause a delay. There was no service in the case I am referring to because there was no welcome in the first place. The team we have believed to be the best was indicated by an evaluating company as a team in need of immediate improvement. The reason for such a low opinion was there was no welcome and no interest was shown when evaluators entered the shop. That company sends anonymous people, who behave like potential buyers, to shops. When the auditors came to our shop, they received no welcome: no good morning, no eye contact, not a nod of a head, not a smile, nor anything which might be perceived as a greeting. No-one from the staff noticed the people entering the shop.

During one of our meetings, during which we discussed the shoe shops of our competition, our colleague Karolina told us a story from a training she participated in; Dariusz was emphasizing the importance of the first impression. She told us that she secretly rebelled against welcoming all visitors in our shops: it seemed to be an exaggeration.

However, having visited several other shops as a potential buyer she realized that a welcome was the exact element she missed the most if it was not given. Without a welcome she did not feel like staying in a shop. She was disconcerted by what she defined as a complete lack of interest in the visiting person. Our own experiences from visits in other companies confirm Karolina's observations and prove that the advice of the evaluation team was right.

We should welcome each visitor; however, not in the same, routine way. The welcome should be individualized. Visitors should feel like long-awaited guests!

2. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR LOOKS.

Our appearance is one of the first things noticed by a visitor. I mean our personal appearance, not the looks of the shop, which we should also take great care of.

We should adapt our looks to what we do. As regards clothes, it is enough if they are clean and neat. Everyone should choose them to compliment their figures. What I believe is very important, though, is that all staff look in a way which shows the visitor that they play in one team.

Appearance is not limited to our clothing. It involves, first of all, our facial expression and body language. We can read the most from people's faces. Boredom, tiredness, and nervousness are visible at first sight. So are incompetence, fear, and uncertainty. We should be especially careful of what our face says. We should remember that the face reflects whatever happens in the heart and the mind. If we lack knowledge, insecurity will be reflected in our face. If we are bored with our work, our face will wear tell-tale signs of it. In the case of a quarrel our face will indicate irritation.

Our body also expresses our emotions. The way we look is strictly related to what we feel and think. We should pay great attention to what happens inside of us and our external appearance will follow.

3. PAY ATTENTION TO THE WAY YOU SPEAK.

It is a great skill which one has to learn but which also comes naturally to those who honestly want to help.

Obviously, we need a different approach when we talk to an elderly woman than when talking to a teenage girl. I remember our friend's special greeting. He greeted visitors so energetically that one elderly ladies asked: "Why is that man shouting at me?" She would better appreciate a peaceful, clear, and respectful "good morning". A young girl, on the other hand, expects a merry and energetic "hello".

If we do not adapt our style to the person, it will give a bad impression. Our tone of voice may offend a person. Unsuitable vocabulary will not be understood.

If the speed and volume of our speech are appropriate, our communication will be successful and we will understand one another. We should carefully adapt our tone, speed of speech, vocabulary, and register to the situation.

4. PAY ATTENTION TO THE WAY YOU MOVE.

The next point concerns our physical bearing. It is determined, to a certain degree, by our nature and personality. Everyone moves differently. I strongly feel that our posture should make it obvious that we are ready to help.

Our deportment is also influenced by what we think. When we think of being somewhere else, our posture will never be appropriate. Thoughts shape the way we stand and walk. Let us imagine a beach, blue sky, warm water and, at the same moment, try to stand ready for service. Impossible! It will surely be easier if we focus our thoughts on making our guest comfortable and the meeting – memorable. At work I often think how much I would like to present our shoes to someone. "I wish someone entered the shop".

The way we move around the shop should express genuine interest in the visitor. We should move fluently and dynamically. We should adjust our movements and pace to our tone and speed of speech. All those aspects should form a harmonious whole.

Our thoughts and actions should be consistent! We should think good thoughts!

5. PAY ATTENTION TO THE WAY YOU PRESENT THINGS.

Products should be shown, in the right proportions, in accordance with our behavior, in harmony with the way we look, talk, and move, with our good intentions and impeccable appearance.

When we work in the fashion industry, the way we display products should reflect current trends. The manner of presentation depends on the product, too. Elegant shoes from the best designers require a different presentation than everyday footwear. We demonstrate the former as if we were participating in an elegant meeting. We show the latter as if we were walking the streets. If we do not match our behavior to the product type, the person we will be attending to might be confused. If we are successful at matching them, we will raise the value of the product and improve communication.

Showing a product can be compared to acting, except that we do not play the role – we create it.

6. BE CAREFUL NOT TO GET STUCK IN A RUT.

Attaining a certain level of proficiency in the art of service may slow down one's progress. More than that – if we believe that we are the best and that we do not have to exert ourselves any more, the development might even be reversed.

Routine is also dangerous in that it prevents us from individualizing our approach to people. We begin to repeat the same phrases in an identical way. We begin to treat people instrumentally. Routine creeps in when we forget that everyone expects respect and requires a very individual treatment.

However, life very quickly verifies such calcified behavior. Do you remember a situation in which someone had to wake you up? Have you ever heard from your listeners that they have heard the same thing from you before or that you have described the previous model in the same words? It happens. Sometimes such remarks can teach us a lesson. I do realize repeating the same information during sales is, to a certain extent, inevitable. Nevertheless, we should adapt the presentation to the person, place, and situation.

If we want to avoid getting stuck in a rut, we should approach service as a creative process. We might think of actor Jerzy Stuhr who starts anew each time he plays the main role in "The Double Bass", even if it is the hundredth time. His engagement and fascination are the same as during the first performance. He always has a great regard for the members of his audience who usually watch the play for the first time. That great actor proves that we can still be fresh and creative during the umpteenth repetition; there is no trace of routine in his acting.

Let us treat the art of service like a theater play and people — like our audience. For our audience it is a new experience. We should always discover something new for ourselves and our visitors. Let us not get stuck in a rut!

7. BEWARE OF A MESS.

“Creative mess” is a myth. There is no way we could serve well in a messy environment.

Statistics show that buyers who have received bad service inform eighteen people about it while the satisfied ones — only eight people. Be careful not to offend anyone! We should put everything in order before we act. Too much freedom makes us treat our job too lightly. We then neglect many aspects of our work. We put the more difficult problems off and, as a result, never solve them. They begin to form a mess.

Off course, I do not want anyone to be tense or nervous at work. I just believe it is important to fulfill one’s obligations as well as possible, with full concentration, engagement, and responsibility. I now know that order is necessary to create something of lasting value. “Creative mess” is just a slogan which justifies laziness. Nothing good has ever come out of it.

I believe order to be necessary in each field of our activity, if we are to do our job well and the company is to run smoothly. Order also means a set of clear and comprehensible rules which govern our behavior, so we understand what is allowed and what is not allowed, what is good and what is bad.

Do not be afraid

1. DO NOT FEAR. ASK QUESTIONS!

Years of experience have taught me that many shop assistants fear talking about subjects other than shoes or their industry. What are they afraid of? What prevents them from starting a conversation? They are afraid that someone might say: “what do you care?”, “it is not any of your business”, or “what insolence”. They fear that selling is not perceived as a very attractive profession. What can a shoe seller offer people? Discard those fears. Just try! How great a conversation might be when we dare to ask: “Where do you live?” and, further: “What is it like living there?” Having broken the ice, on many occasions I felt as if I had known my interlocutor for ages. I was sure I was trusted.

When we overcome our fears we can cross a boundary which we may have thought we were only able to cross when talking to friends. If we manage to do that with tact, delicacy, and class, we become acquaintances.

Asking where someone lives is just one possibility. We can turn our attention to a visitor's dog, coat or dress, work, free time, the last meal he or she has cooked and if the family liked it. You can ask about interests and anything you can think of. The only condition is that the question must be asked in the context of the conversation and out of genuine interest. The person should feel our question is disinterested. We talk in order to find out interesting things, to learn something new about people and the world. We do not want to use that information for commercial purposes.

And people open! Everyone loves sharing experiences and feelings. It gives us great joy and satisfaction. I have noticed that people leave the shop satisfied, and sometimes even happier after such chats. When we share our passions we are elated and when we share sorrows a part of the burden comes off our heart. That is a sufficient reason to take courage and ask appropriate questions.

2. DO NOT FEAR. GIVE HONEST ANSWERS.

In the previous chapter I have encouraged you to ask questions. In this one I ask you to answer honestly. Do not fear to speak openly and freely, even when a question seems to put you in an uncomfortable position, for example: "have you had complaints about this model?" How would you answer that question? It is rather easy. You should just give an honest answer: yes or no. If yes, you should explain why. If no, you should assure the asker about it.

There are more difficult questions, though. "Have you not found a job anywhere else?" "Do you have to work here?" "Are you looking for a different job, a better paid one or a more prestigious one?"

To answer them is a harder task. Here one must really like the job in order to extricate oneself with elegance.

Anyway, those questions must also be answered honestly.

People are impressed the most by the fact that we are in the right position. That fact raises us in their eyes. They begin to think of us with due respect. "That is amazing, I did not know that a selling job could give so much satisfaction! What an interesting person." That is how the person we are attending to begins to think of us. Then they conclude: "If he is so passionate about his job then the products on offer are most likely very good. He really inspires my trust. I will listen to his advice and use his experience." In the end, the person decides to also share their knowledge with us and offer us something.

It really works that way. This is how wonderful, lasting relationships between people are formed.

If we meet that person in the future, in his or her place of work, we will be offered the same kind of energy. It is fantastic to remember people and be remembered.

3. PLEASE, REMEMBER!

We usually remember such contacts for a long time. We are also remembered by our interlocutors.

I do not know a better way to appreciate someone than to continue a conversation from the point we ended it the last time. That is the highest standard of contact. People love questions such as: "How are the

shoes we have chosen the last time?”, “did you enjoy your holidays as much as you expected?”, or: “Is your daughter doing well at the university?” Please, remember what you have been talking about with people. Return to that topic during the next meeting. Strike a conversation in a natural way, out of genuine interest. It is like reading an interesting book. We begin a new chapter but remember what happened in the previous ones.

I do realize we cannot remember all the people we have attended to. They can refresh our memory themselves, for example by saying: “You have helped me so much when I was choosing the boots last time. My friends keep asking me where I have bought them”, “You were right we should not be afraid of suede, even in winter”, and also by saying: “I have seen that film, it is good”, “I have cooked that meal, my family liked it very much”, “my son does not want to wear any other shoes”. Those statements lead us to the right track. We open the next chapter of our relationship.

4. BE BRAVE AND TAKE INITIATIVE. CREATE AND INSPIRE.

That is the moment I love – the moment I can offer something out of my own initiative. I can find someone shoes which I believe will best match his or her style.

When I visited some restaurants often, I relied on the waiter or cook for my meals. Then, I waited, excited, for the dish. It was a wonderful feeling, especially when the dish turned out to be delicious. I still do that but only in places where I know the staff or intuitively feel I can trust them. This is because in one restaurant I drank fabulous wine which, however, turned out to be too expensive for me. Since then I set the upper price level for my experience before indulging in it.

In my job I try to look at people, their style, posture, gait, and manner of speech, and I usually can guess what kind of shoes I should offer them, without them telling me so. Very often the person I am attending to has never even looked at a given shoe type. I like to see the joy on his or her face when I suggest something they like. I often hear the person has not noticed that shoe on the shelf.

I also like it when the person I attend to asks me for a certain type of shoe. Let us say a man needs evening shoes, shows me the type, and tells me the size. I fetch him the selected model but together with two very different ones which, however, I feel would match that man’s style. I offer the first model to try on but right after that I begin to present my own ideas. People usually appreciate it. When we make a justified choice of an unexpected shoe type, it can bring a lot of joy to both parties. How can we justify our initiative? We can do it in many ways. The first one is to tell the person why we have taken initiative. “I could not restrain myself and had to offer you this shoe, please do not protest and try it on. It is made for you.”

You will select your own words by the general meaning should be as above.

“Here I have something that is really your style, please, try it on.” It works! But it only works when we have good intentions.

Be brave with your own initiative!

Face challenges!

You should be resistant to all kinds of hardships.

1. FACE CHALLENGES.

If we want to be able to overcome all difficulties and failures, we should stop blaming others for them. Blaming another person is the easiest way out. We feel a bit better when we do that. We believe we are justified to a certain extent. Such a blame game will prevent us from ever understanding the real reasons for our failure. We will not be able to improve the situation.

We need to find the causes of problems in ourselves to effectively deal with them. The first step to improving things should be correcting and demanding the most from ourselves. I call it taking responsibility for ourselves.

If there are difficulties, we should ask ourselves a few questions. What have I done wrong? What has caused the failure? What should I change in myself to prevent the situation from occurring again? What must I do to handle that difficult situation?

If we start to act that way, we will stop experiencing failures and difficulties. Even if some hardships do appear, we will manage to deal with them. Let us remember that we can find a solution to every problem, even if we cannot see the solution at the moment.

Let me give you a simple example related to being responsible for our way of living. I often drive a car. Sometimes I take the wrong road. It used to irritate me a lot. I analyzed the situation and came to a simple conclusion. I usually lost the way when I shifted the responsibility for the right direction to my travel mate. Whenever I did that, I stopped paying attention to where I was going because I believed that my friend would show me the right direction. He should have known where we were going. Since I began taking responsibility for choosing the right direction, I hardly ever lose the way, regardless of whether I travel myself or with a passenger. And when I do get lost, I do not blame anyone. I know who has made the error. I am able to rectify it quickly.

Each of us has their own way. Those individual ways intersect. Assuming responsibility does not mean forgetting other people. We usually face difficulties created by ourselves. Let us take responsibility for our actions, to make other people's lives easier. Let us not get too much in their way. We should cooperate instead of competing. The happiest marriages are formed by people who complement each other, and do not compete over who is better at this or that.

The same principles apply to our work. We should cooperate and support one another, taking responsibility for our own behavior. We should not be rivals, trying to prove who is superior, but work together toward a common goal.

I really want everyone to be responsible for what they do. I ask God to show us the right path and lead us on it.

2. FACE BOREDOM.

How to face boredom? We should always look for and learn new things. We should broaden our horizons, gain knowledge.

We become apathetic when we do not have too much to do. Do you remember a time when you had to wait for hours for someone, bored because nothing was happening? I believe that such periods of waiting are harder to endure than work. Personally, I feel better during a sale when one cannot even sit down for many hours on end than during the months when we look at one another, doing nothing. Such breaks at work are the best moments to begin a quest and learn something new, things we have not known so far. It is a time to think over matters which we have been postponing for a long time, to think over the unsolved problems, to tidy up our thoughts, and be grounded in our values. Apparently, we also need that time.

Another kind of boredom is becoming tired of one's work. We feel that we are no longer efficient at it and that we lose faith in what we do. The work does not give us joy or satisfaction any more. More than that, it can lead to depression. At such a moment we should go on a holiday. If that does not help, we should think about changing our job. If we come to the conclusion that we no longer want to do our job, we should change it immediately. We should not fear making such a decision. I can guarantee that, difficult as it may seem at the beginning, it will be beneficial for ourselves and for the company we work for. We will get off the wrong path and start to look for our own, the one we have a calling for.

3. FACE LAZINESS.

We should draw a distinction between boredom and laziness. We can justify boredom to a certain extent but we cannot condone laziness. Laziness should not be countenanced. We should not allow ourselves to be lazy because then we would stop developing or, worse, regress. We would be lulled into a false sense of security. Laziness is a state in which we procrastinate. We do not look for or discover new things.

One man who is never bored is Dariusz Grabowski. We have been working together since the beginnings of this company. It gives me great pleasure to watch him work. He shows us how to do our job. I want to

learn from him. Why does he work that way? The answer seems to be simple. Passion for our work rules laziness out.

We need an inner drive to fight laziness. We will find the drive when we realize that time passes irrevocably. Let us not waste that precious gift.

4. FACE FAILURES.

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The work of salespeople is a constant stream of failures. Statistics show that only about 5% of people who enter a shop make a purchase. That is the average, particular results can be better or worse.

What can we conclude from that? We let ninety-five out of one hundred people out without a sale because we do not manage to communicate well with them, we do not have appropriate products for them, the price level is not adjusted to the market, we have opened a shop in the wrong place, or because of other factors.

Should we give in to depression on that account? Maybe it would be more sensible to take good care of the remaining five out of one hundred people. We should try to serve them as well as we can, in every little thing. I believe that is the best method to build our position and increase the effectiveness of our work.

Experience shows us that five percent of professionally served people can sometimes bring amazing results. They may become our clients for years to come.

The more people visit the shop the better because five percent out of a thousand is already fifty satisfied people who will share their satisfaction with their families and friends. I believe we should not focus on possible failures or dwell on them for too long. We should analyze them, draw our conclusions, and avoid the mistakes in the future. If possible, we should correct our errors.

Overthinking failures hinders our development. It can even cause regression. We move forward on the wave of success!

5. FACE IMPATIENCE.

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I have already written about people's different needs. Now I would like to focus on the pace of decision-making. My experience has shown me that some people make a decision on the spot while others take months to do that.

I have often seen impatience on my colleagues' faces. I have felt it myself.

Impatience appears when we have exhausted all the arguments for the purchase. We have shown all we had to show and there is no reaction. The person we attend to hesitates. No decision is made. That is the moment when we should become real advisors, analysts who can objectively evaluate facts and act on the basis of that evaluation, stylists who combine various elements into a whole. That is when we should express our genuine opinion on whether the thing suits the person. That is also the time for a psychological analysis of whether it would be better to make a purchase now or during another visit.

I like giving people time to think. I am happy when their decisions are backed by common sense. I also know that there are people who like it when someone else makes a decision for them. Several times I have asked a waiter to choose a dish for me. In such cases, I relied on the waiter's honesty and knowledge. Going to a car mechanic's, I trusted the specialists. Most of the time it ended well. That is why I am not afraid to say to people who cannot make up their mind: "That's it" or "You look great in those shoes", or "There is nothing to think about, just buy them". I only say that when I believe it myself.

Be patient but determined.

Exude joy!

1. EXPRESS GENUINE INTEREST IN OTHERS.

Showing people that we want them to feel good in our company and striving to serve them as best we can is the first step toward a good contact. Even if we make some mistakes later they will be forgiven because of our honest intentions.

If we are to show real interest in a person, we need to truly care for his or her satisfaction. If we wish people all the best, we will also express genuine interest in them. Let us add to that the willingness to help and to give advice. Treat your work as a mission to serve other people. I do realize that it may sound a little weird, a little too lofty, or unsuitable to the situation. We associate the concept of a mission with the fields of education, medicine, lawgiving. People working in those fields are perceived as realizing a mission of service – but not people in commerce. But why not? Why should we not view our professional activity in that light? In order to have a good understanding of what the mission of being of service to people is, one has to establish correct priorities. My mission involves prioritizing people in all circumstances. In commercial dealings money has the highest priority. Herein lies the difference. That difference is of utmost importance.

Honest intentions and showing interest will make us reach our goal: good service.

2. SHOW HOW COMPETENT YOU ARE.

Use all your knowledge about products and services. Impress with your competence. Competence involves natural self-confidence, without arrogance or false pride. It also involves very good preparation for one's role and professional preparation for the job. It is an outcome of knowledge and predispositions, skills and talent.

If we feel competent at work, our contacts with people are greatly enjoyable. We understand one another easily. Self-development is a necessary condition for feeling competent at work. We should not rest on our laurels but continue to learn.

I often observe people in various places. You would probably agree that it is easy to notice competent people. After some time, they become highly respected. That esteem gives them wings and has an impact on their personal development.

3. SHOW YOUR PASSION.

Have you ever witnessed a conversation of people talking about their life passion? What a wonderful spectacle. It is like watching a play with an all-star cast. Often they do not even have to know one another because they are on the same wavelength. I once listened to a conversation between Krzysztof Woźniak, my long-time workmate, and Piotr Tarnacki, world Micro Class master, about sailing. I did not know or understand many phrases and abbreviations, however, their passion for gliding through the waves was obvious and made me dream about going to the sea. It was a great pleasure to listen to them talking.

We should find a job which would inspire us to talk about it the way those two men discussed sailing, until the wee hours. We would then be able to make others see details they would not ordinarily notice and inspire them, in turn. It is immediately obvious when someone is fascinated by their job.

4. SHOW YOUR JOY OF LIFE.

May the joy of life, harmonious spirit, and happiness emanate from us every day. People with those wonderful features attract others like magnets. We admire them and are truly envious. Personally, I love being around joyful people. They have a clear conscience and act consistently with their ideals, do good, and honor the truth.

When I looked at Pope John Paul II I saw he was full of joy of life. When I listened to the eighty-year-old Professor Władysław Bartoszewski, I admired his vitality. He lived the truth his whole life and never betrayed his ideals. I also see joy of life in people in my surroundings. At this point I must mention my

workmate, Anna Bogacka. She is very joyful. I do not know where the joy comes from, it is just in her. Everyone likes her very much. I know many people who enjoy life. They are people who relish every moment and never forget how fascinating the world can be. Most importantly, I believe, they are not indifferent to beautiful things.

Let us rediscover the beauty of the world, every day. Let us enjoy that beauty and share the joy with others.

5. SHOW YOUR ENTHUSIASM.

Enthusiasm is a willingness to act. "Let us want to want", to quote the lyrics of Andrzej Sikorowski's song.

Let us find in ourselves the motivation to act with enthusiasm, energy which will add vigor to our actions. That energy is within us. We just have to learn to find it and activate it. In order to do that, we have to believe that our work has a deep meaning, that what we do is of service to others. People need our work. They appreciate our efforts and are grateful to us for them.

We should learn how to exude enthusiasm.

End well!

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO END WELL?

It means to combine the ending with an invitation. I understand the ending as the last stage of a meeting with someone, of being with and talking to that person. It should not matter to us if he or she has made a deal with us. We have spent time together – that is important.

Have we felt good together? Have we made every effort to create an atmosphere which will be missed and remembered often, an atmosphere one wants to go back to? Have we managed to get to know the person with whom we have spent that time? Have we managed to exchange good feelings? Have we seen a smile on our guest's face? Have we smiled, too, and do we find that time special?

If we answer those question in the affirmative, it means that we have ended well. We have reasons to be happy.

2. LET THE CLOSURE BECOME AN INVITATION.

The best ending is an invitation to another meeting.

See you! See you soon! Let us have in mind the literal meaning of those everyday phrases. The phrase “see you” means we want to see each other again and “see you soon” means we are really looking forward to that encounter. Let us not bid people farewell, let us invite them to new, successful meetings.

Epilog

Many of you, dear readers, will find the contents of the Guide to Good Service rather obvious. Have they helped you organize your thoughts? Have they allowed you to look at your work afresh? Have they been thought-provoking? I hope so.

It is not enough to just read the Guide to Good Service. The most important thing is to try apply it to our life and work. Sometimes we will fail and sometimes we will provide excellent service. Practice makes perfect. Life often turns out to be more complex than we would expect. It is a tapestry of success and failure, joy and sadness, drama and comedy, weddings and funerals, births and deaths. We have no other choice but find ourselves on the great stage of life. Let us do that and look for appropriate work. Then we will feel that "our work is right for us and not the other way round".

Thank you and I wish you all the best.

Piotr Janukowicz

NOTES

[1] Neurolinguistic Programming. A New Discipline of Psychology.

[2] A language which excludes all forms of the verb 'be', in all forms and conjugations.

