

James Butler's Newsletter #36

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

August 2005

How many of you have managed to banish Dobby to Siberia? He came up in conversation with a number of clients after the last newsletter, and for some he was harder to deport than for others. Trust me that he just needs to learn he no longer has an audience – so keep up the good work of shutting him out!

This month, the inspiration for my newsletter came from two experiences I had over the weekend. One involved lounging on the sofa watching a movie, the other some more energetic activity – running.

Grow Your Goldfish



If you have ever kept goldfish, you may know that they grow to a size that suits the bowl or tank they live in. If you transfer them to a bigger tank, this often promotes a growth spurt.

I think we're the same (in terms of our personal or professional development, not our physical size). We grow to a level that is comfortable for our existing environment, and tend not to grow further unless someone or something expands our horizons. I have come to believe this more fully this summer, after my experience with running training.

A year ago the furthest I had ever run was about 10 miles, when I was much younger. In 2004, an average run was about 2 miles and the longest I did was about 6 or 7 miles. Last year, for some unknown reason, my wife and I decided to run a half marathon (13 miles), and we trained in order to be able to run that distance (and did, in November 2004).

Had you asked me to run 18 miles twelve months ago I would have spluttered in disbelief and given a million excuses. Yet yesterday that is exactly what I did – I ran 18 miles with my wife around Oxfordshire. "Why?" I hear you ask (and I did wonder myself several times during that run!).

Well, my wife and I are running a full marathon (26.2 miles) in a little under eight weeks, and the 18 mile run is part of our training plan. Now, when you run 18 miles you get a lot of thinking time, and yesterday I started to see how my running relates to you, the reader. My running is just another illustration of the goldfish growing in his bowl.

Our training plan requires us to run a few times in the week, and then a long run on the weekend. The long run gets longer by 1 mile each week. So my previous long run was 17 miles, and the next is 19. And whereas 12 months ago, I could never have dreamt of running 18 miles, now I have. And I have some confidence I will do 19 next week. And I am less and less fearful of the full 26.2 miles in October.

All this because I put myself in a bigger goldfish bowl – I asked more of myself than I had before. I didn't leap from 6 miles to 18, I built up gradually, and my body has grown its ability to respond each time I have asked more of it. I don't recount this to sound clever, fit or athletic – I recount it because I still can't quite believe that I have done it! So now I believe almost anyone could run that far, and that almost anyone can achieve far more in life than they currently do – if they only put themselves in a bigger goldfish bowl.

What could you do if you only asked more of yourself?

Top 6 Fish-Growing Tips

If you do want to grow, in whatever way, what useful things can we learn from my marathon training experience?

The Power of Vision - I have lost count of how many times I have mentioned this in a newsletter, but it is so crucial it deserves to be here every time. I have a clear picture of me completing the marathon (it isn't too pretty!!), and that is what drives me on in my preparation. What detailed vision do you want to grow into – what is it you want to have come true?

A Clear Purpose – Bev and I are running for charity (see below for details), and every time I feel like stopping (which is a lot!), I picture the village in South Africa, and what good the money will do – and I dig deep to carry on. What is the true purpose behind your growth – what will drive you on in the face of setback or adversity?

A Plan – we have a clear training plan based on research of running magazines and books. We have faith it will deliver if we just follow the plan. A key feature of this plan is the regular milestones (no pun intended) of each mile we add to the length of our run. This reduces the chance to drift from week to week and maintains focus. Do your plans for you or your business have clear milestones as you progress to your vision?

Flexibility – not of my leg muscles, but of the plan! The one-extra-mile-a-week plan included the chance for some weeks off – if we were poorly, had other commitments etc. This meant we could get back on plan easily and without over-stretching. Does your plan allow you to achieve the goal in a flexible manner? Sometimes new opportunities arise that will propel your growth more than you realise – being flexible allows you to take those chances. A flexible plan also allows you to take a breather and not beat yourself up (Dobby's in Siberia, remember!).

Support – a number of other people have helped me get this far. My star osteopath Rick Weatherall fixed a knee problem when I was still at 9 or 10 mile runs, and keeps me maintained now as the mileage builds. And Bev is my running partner and my life partner, What she lacks in leg length she makes up for in heart and determination. Sharing the training keeps us both on track (again, no pun, honest!) and we mentally pull each other along. What support do you need around you for you to achieve your vision?

Combine Intention and Action – my former coach Rachel Turner was very keen for me to learn that Intention + Action = Outcome. You need both. Wanting to achieve my Vision is no good if I don't do something to make it happen. I couldn't run 18 miles now if I hadn't run 12 a month or two ago. What specific actions do you need to take to make your intention a reality? By when? What accountability do you need to set up to support you?

This isn't about everyone running a long way, it is about the fact we all have something like a marathon in our lives – something on the "if only", "some day" or "I wish I could" lists. For me, right now, it is crossing that line in October. What is it for you?

How big could you grow in a bigger tank?

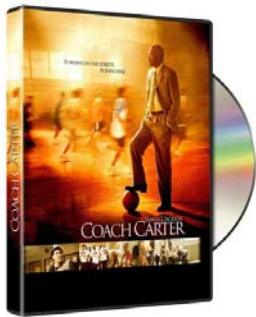
Painless Business News

This week (25th August) sees me speaking at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in London, helping my audience to find the *Painless Way to Grow a Business*. If only I could find the painless way to run a marathon! This event is certain to raise awareness of a number of ways to increase business, improve sales and expend less effort – visit www.londoncoachinggroup.co.uk immediately to reserve a place!

As you will have already guessed, my marathon training is becoming a major part of my life – and it has led to some interesting scheduling to fit work commitments around it. Alongside the training is the fundraising work to make all the running worthwhile. I now have a website to allow people to make a donation to the funds Bev and I are raising. If you are interested in seeing why we are doing this, please have a look at the site at www.bmycharity.com/chokomarathon (making a donation is optional, but would be greatly appreciated!).

You can expect the October newsletter to feature in-depth product testing of blister cream and other post-run treatments!

Book Review



Remember how I said the inspiration for this newsletter came from running and watching a movie? Well, the movie in question was *Coach Carter* starring Samuel L. Jackson. Now, I think Mr Jackson is the king of cool, and never makes a bad movie, and this one is true to form.

The film is a true story of a high school basketball coach in an inner-city school in the San Francisco Bay Area. He became famous because he wanted his students to do well academically, not just play ball.

I won't spoil the film, but the story really makes you think about how we often perform to what is expected of us, and if that is a low standard, that is all we achieve. By holding ourselves, or being held by others, to a higher standard we gain greater belief and determination – and stand a higher chance of doing well. A great movie!

Those of you now wondering when Coach Butler will be hitting your screens (with Anthony Edwards in the lead role of course), you'll have to wait a little while yet. The first book is almost out, but I think a movie would be too big a goldfish bowl right now!

Painless Puns

I have the following inspiring thoughts for you this month:

Average is just not good enough. Period.

Coach Ken Carter

When you reach for the stars you may not quite get one, but you won't come up with a handful of mud either.

Leo Burnett

For a man to achieve all that is demanded of him he must regard himself as greater than he is.

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

During *Coach Carter*, the coach repeatedly asks one student what is his deepest fear. Eventually the student recites a beautiful poem by Marianne Williamson, often mistakenly attributed to Nelson Mandela. It goes like this:

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us.
We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant?
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.
We were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates others.*

"Your playing small does not serve the world" has given me faith to play a bigger game many times. What could you achieve if you accepted you were 'powerful beyond measure'?

On the subject of fish, some great fish songs the world needs to hear:

*Don't Koi for Me, Argen-Tuna
Minnow the Moocher
Lox be a Lady Tonight
Any of the songs from the musical Marlin Rouge
And, of course, the theme from The Godfather*

And a rare "Quiz Corner" this month. A prize to whoever can tell me why I have to run an extra 385 yards, in addition to the 26 miles, in October. The original race distance was 26 miles, but it was lengthened some time in the last century – why?

Final Words

I wish you a great month growing beyond your current goldfish bowl. I would love to hear your stories. Next month, in celebration of the third anniversary of this newsletter, we have the return of our most popular topic – Swedish philosophy (Abba).

Warmest regards

James Butler

email: james@painlessbusiness.com
voice: +44 1491 659073
web: <http://www.painlessbusiness.com>
© James Butler 2005

Painless Business is a trading name of Painless Ltd. Registered in England No: 5362019

Quick Links...

Subscribe Now

<http://www.painlessbusiness.com/newsletters/>

More About James Butler

<http://www.painlessbusiness.com/about/profile/>

Previous Newsletters

<http://www.painlessbusiness.com/newsletters/>