

James Butler's Newsletter #35

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

July 2005

This weekend sees the publication of the sixth Harry Potter book, amidst much hype and hysteria (you've got to admire JK Rowling's marketing!). In honour of the young wizard, I have decided to revisit a topic I have already covered (though it was two years ago, so many of you will not have seen the original!).

If you ever hear yourself bringing up nagging doubts before you do something challenging, this newsletter is for you. If you never hear that doubtful inner voice, I would love to hear from you!

Dobby Returns!!



To any who don't know the Harry Potter stories, Dobby is an elf, effectively a servant to Harry Potter, who is filled with doubt and self-loathing and spends a lot of time hitting himself over the head and shouting "Bad Dobby".

The more and more I work with business people and others, the more I see that such a character appears to lurk in all of us, and we are consistently harder on ourselves than anyone else would even dream of. And what good does it do us?

I have recently re-read Rich Dad, Poor Dad (see Book Review). At one point Kiyosaki recounts his observations in teaching over 20 years and I paraphrase them here:

We all have tremendous potential, and we are all blessed with gifts. Yet, the one thing that holds us all back is some degree of self-doubt. Excessive fear and self-doubt are the greatest detractors of personal genius.

So my mission this month is to lessen that level of self-doubt amongst my clients, my readership and anyone else I can influence (and I will rely on you to reach out to those you know). How different could the world be if we could show Dobby the door and tell him he's not welcome anymore?

Before we can give him the boot, where does Dobby show up?

Underplaying success – two of my current clients repeatedly bemoan the lack of custom for their business – yet when we review their weekly sales figures they are going up (they aren't where they want them to be, but they're heading that way!). Dobby tells them financial failure is around the corner!

Stifling innovation – another client is full of ideas and energy, but then dismisses those ideas as just dreams, and Dobby berates them for never completing projects. Not only is that wasted effort, it could mean the baby is thrown out with the bath water and the one product development or PR idea that would revolutionise their business disappears before they know it.

Wasting effort – in business we all have so much to deal with it can sap our energy (and sometimes our will to live!). So why waste energy beating ourselves up (or letting Dobby do it) too. Of course, then Dobby can have a go because we wasted effort, and the circle continues!

Bowing to pressure – we face a huge number of pressures to conform in our lives, personal and business. In our private life it might be about marriage, children, lifestyle or status symbol. In business the greatest pressure is always to grow the business, whereas a number of my clients are clear that isn't what they want – they are happy with being how they are. Dobby tells them they “should” be getting more business, hiring staff, opening up satellite operations, etc.

Fearing loss – just when we get a new client, find a new partner or launch a new service, we start telling ourselves we'll never deliver, the client will realise their mistake, or we're not good enough for the new partner. Then Dobby takes over, we spend too much effort telling ourselves it won't work out, distracting ourselves from the task at hand – and occasionally prove ourselves right! And then we have evidence we're useless, ready for next time!

Take a moment to think through the last week and write down all the times Dobby has been influencing what you have done. Has Dobby helped or hindered? If you could shut Dobby up, what would have done differently? Is it too late to follow that alternative path?

Send Dobby to Siberia



Hopefully you have now decided that Dobby is someone you don't need on your team. So it's time to get rid of him and send him somewhere that he won't come back from. With due respect to any readers from the former Soviet Union, I will suggest Siberia – as that has represented for decades a place people rarely returned from. If you prefer a UK example, try Moss Side, Manchester.

So, given that Dobby isn't real, you can't physically send him, so what can you do?

Affirmations and Achievement Journals – I mentioned these last month – so look back to that issue for how they could be helpful.

Recognise his presence – when you hear that voice going off in your head, recognise that it is Dobby, and that 9 times out of 10 he is only stating beliefs, rarely facts. Thank him for his contribution, then imagine him shivering on the ice in the picture above. He'll then be too busy keeping warm to bother you!

Deal with Dobby's cause – often Dobby's voice comes from long-held fears, beliefs that hold us back but may not be true, previous bad experiences or pressure from others. To truly lock Dobby up in his icy cell, find what is driving him in you, and deal with it. For many of these issues some personal development, discussion with others or professional help can permanently free you from the root of such negative thoughts.

Talk to someone else – if Dobby is the only one you discuss life with, it's going to be hard to send him away. Find a positive support person to have a real conversation with – a colleague, a partner or a coach. The more you have those positive conversations, the more Dobby will be shivering.

Send Dobby a postcard – drop a line to Dobby, c/o 31 Station Road, Cholsey, OX10 9PT and I'll forward it on to him. Tell him how great you're doing without him, and be sure to end with “Wish you weren't here”!!

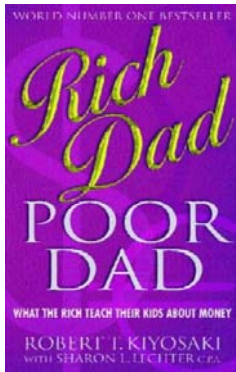
Painless Business News

This month I gave a presentation at *Coaching Essentials* on running and developing a business, the start of a few months of regular speaking engagements. Watch this space or the website for details! Already booked is a talk at the CIPD in London on 25th August. The cost is just £5 and I will be talking on *The Painless Way to Grow a Practice*. Don't let Dobby talk you out of coming – visit www.londoncoachinggroup.co.uk to reserve a place!

Another talk I am looking forward to is The Tuesday Business Club near Wallingford (home turf!). This is a great new networking group, and I will be addressing them on October 11th. I am delighted to say that I have finally achieved a personal goal as my talk is entitled "What Business Can Learn From Abba's Hits". Should be fun!

In the last few weeks I have been studying a short course on E-Myth Mastery, based on Michael Gerber's new book (just started it, so look out for next month's Book Review!). This has helped me re-think a number of the systems within Painless Limited in an attempt to walk the talk and have the company be painless! Clients will see a few changes in coming months as I implement the changes with my VA, Carol.

Book Review



The truly Painless way to earn a living is not to work for it, and *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* is a vital text for anyone even considering such an option.

Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lechter set out a series of arguments on financial intelligence, and end with a 10-step plan for any of us to work towards financial freedom. What I love is that this isn't about get-rich-quick, it's about sensible, considered strategies to improve one's finances. Now all I need to do is stop Dobby talking me out of it!

Painless Puns

I have the following inspiring thoughts for you this month:

Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation. It is better be alone than in bad company.
George Washington

I have not ceased being fearful, but I have ceased to let fear control me.
Erica Jong

Too many of us are not living our dreams because we are living our fears.
Les Brown

I went to a friend's wedding last weekend and I noticed she had a present from a psychiatrist. How could I tell? It was shrink wrapped.

A guy on our table was poorly though. He ate some bread even though he was allergic to wheat, because he was a gluten for punishment.

Final Words

I cannot finish without mentioning the horrific bomb attacks in London. I was in Tavistock Square the day before and my wife Bev was in London on the day. It brought back horrible memories of 9/11, waiting to hear that a friend who worked in the World Trade Centre was OK. At this time we should remember those less fortunate, who have lost loved ones or were affected themselves.

Whilst I do believe we must defeat these attacks by maintaining the freedoms and way of life we can be proud of in the UK, I also think this can be an opportunity to stop and think what drives people to take life like this. Coach U, the organisation I do a lot of work for, has as one of its nine Guiding Principles "People Grow By Connection". Surely the best response to the madness of 7th July is to reach out to people in communities other than our own and learn from them and understand our commonality and differences.

If you take two things away from reading this newsletter, please let them be this: send Dobby to Siberia and never let him back – be all you can be; and secondly, create a new connection with someone so that you both grow stronger as a result.

And enjoy Harry Potter 6 this weekend!!

Warmest regards

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