

James Butler's Newsletter #66

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

February 2008

Many of you will know that travel is an important part of Butler family life. In our years together, we have been lucky enough to witness some amazing sights across the world. So when I say that the inspiration for this newsletter is one of the most beautiful places I have visited, that recommendation is not made lightly. I am referring to Zion National Park in southern Utah, USA, which Bev and I explored in October last year.

The Narrows



Zion National Park is a canyon, carved by the Virgin River. As visitors, you travel at the bottom of the canyon, looking up at cliffs that tower over 2000ft into the sky. At the end of the bus route is a walking trail along the riverbank. After a mile or so, the trail ends in the river itself.

The adventurous thing to do at this point is to walk up in the river, as the canyon narrows to tens of feet wide, but still thousands of feet deep – a section called “The Narrows”.

Friends of ours had done this before, but we were unsure whether we were up for this – especially as the water in October is not at its warmest!

At the head of the trail we met people coming back from doing it, and they inspired us to come back the next day and give it a go – here is a pic of Bev in the river!

As my mind never stops looking for newsletter topics, that walk got me thinking!

Take Advice – our first lesson was to listen to those who had just done what we wanted to do. They explained what it was like, and most importantly informed us of an equipment hire shop in the nearby village who could supply all the kit. As you are looking to grow your business or achieve more in life, who can offer you advice and experience?

Be Open to a Change in Plan – our holidays are usually planned with military precision – as anyone who came on the [Choko](#) trip last year will testify. The Narrows were a change to the plan, but a fantastic opportunity that we would have been daft to spurn. In our normal lives, one important skill is to recognise opportunities when they arise – and to take the right ones. How aware are you to such possibilities, and how will you decide if they are right for you?

Have the Right Equipment – Bev is renowned for feeling the chill in a tropical forest, so getting her to walk in a river was going to require some serious thermal insulation. The equipment shop was an excellent example of customer service and had all we needed. Not the most flattering gear, but it kept us safe, warm and dry. This was the difference between an enjoyable experience and an ordeal. What equipment do you need to enjoy what you’re doing, and how can you acquire it?

Go Beyond Your Comfort Zone – we only experienced this amazing walk because both of us, and especially Bev, was prepared (I wouldn't say willing) to test her limits in terms of personal safety and comfort. We grow as people by stretching our limits – the key is to stretch into the "challenging" zone and not the "life-threatening" zone. Are you pushing your boundaries? What would be an achievable project that is outside of your comfort zone?

Know When to Stop – one can have too much of a good thing. After a few hours of wading and picking our way against the current, the canyon narrowed significantly. This means the current is faster, and it got to be harder and harder work. Time to think smarter, not work harder, so we retraced our steps and took a side canyon – which had a much smaller river, more chance to walk on the bank, and significantly less people. That was possibly the best bit of the day! How can you work smarter, not harder? Where are you struggling to make your way, and is it time to stop and see if another route would be more productive?

Sometimes in Life it Pays to be Tall – I was very aware that as I waded against the current, in icy cold water, over unstable rocks, with the water up to just below the knee, just behind me someone was struggling over the same terrain with water up to her mid-thigh. I may bang my head more often, but it can pay to be over 6ft when standing in a river!

I hope you have enjoyed my holiday story, and I hope you can draw some thoughts for your own projects from the questions I have asked. These lessons arise all the time with my clients, it was nice to have a theme that could bring them out! Please do take the time to think them through, discuss them with someone and take action as a result. If you would like my support in doing that, I am of course very happy to discuss how we can work together.

Painless Business News

My main observation from my own business in the last month is that when one makes an effort, one is often rewarded, even if that reward may come from a totally unpredictable source! I have worked hard in recent weeks to be more proactive in my networking and marketing (unlike my friends Carol and Liz, who I have to keep nagging – they know who they are). This has produced some direct results and some effort has fallen on stony ground. And then last week I got an enquiry as a result of a book I featured in about 3 years ago – definitely a source I would never have predicted!

This marketing effort has also reminded me that such activity can stimulate referrals as much as direct sales, and that can be a better outcome. Thanks to those of you who do pass this newsletter or my name to others – and please do it some more! Asking for referrals is a challenge that arises for many clients, and all I can stress is that if you ask nicely, people seem to want to help!

Book Review

One book stands out as book of the month this issue – *One Fourteenth of An Elephant* by Ian Denys Peek. Ian was a prisoner of war on the infamous Burmese Railway in the 1940s. Written recently, but as if it were a diary written at the time (they had no such luxury as pen and paper in the camps), it is a moving, inspiring and troubling book. With his experience, his thoughts on humanity, religion and the British officer class were very thought provoking. Obviously it is not a comedy, but I recommend it to anyone.

My friend Allan also kindly gave me a copy of *Being Brilliant* by Andrew Cope, which I enjoyed immensely. A management book based on a guy running a circus (and how often does your workplace feel like a circus!), which is easy to read and has some good lessons.

Painless Puns

Some inspiring thoughts I have come across recently:

Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It is already tomorrow in Australia.
Charles Schultz

Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned. Peter Marshall

Possession of material riches, without inner peace, is like dying of thirst while bathing in a lake.
Paramahansa Yogananda

A farmer friend recently came home and his wife said "I've made the chicken soup." He replied "Oh thank God, I thought that muck was for us."

Another friend's wife was very upset. She said "It's a disaster, the dog has eaten the dinner I cooked for you!" "Cheer up," he said. "I'll get you a new puppy."

Final Words

Last October, we took an opportunity that was outside our comfort zone, made sure we had the right knowledge and equipment and were rewarded with a truly memorable experience. What can you do this month that will have you looking back with happy memories in a few months?

Warmest regards

James Butler

email: james@painlessbusiness.com voice: +44 1491 659073 © James Butler 2008

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/

James Butler helps people build the business they want. Through improving your strategic outlook and guiding you on sales, marketing and personal development he can provide renewed motivation and momentum in building your business.

Careful assessment of your needs ensures that the most appropriate intervention is supplied – whether one to one ongoing coaching, strategic reviews, training events or facilitated group exercises within a team.

To discuss how you can painlessly build the business you want, call James today for a no-obligation discussion of your situation.