

Pull Out the Stoppers – Act with Passion

By Tom Massey, Ph.D.

*“Do not seek illumination unless you seek it
as a man whose hair is on fire seeks a pond.”*

- Sri Ramakrishna

Lester Wunderman wanted to work in advertising. He found a job with an advertising firm in New York and worked as an apprentice studying under Max Sackheim, one of the great minds in the field at that time. Things didn't work out the way he planned and Lester was fired from his job. Motivated by the decision to learn what Sackheim could teach him, he continued to show up at his office every day – without pay. The story is told that after a month of this, Sackheim walked up to him and said, “Okay, okay, you win. I never saw a man who wanted a job more than he wanted money. You can have your job back.”

Wunderman went on to become one of the most successful people in advertising in this century. In fact some refer to him today as the father of direct marketing. All began with an action motivated by passion.

People who act with passion pull out all the stoppers. They go at it like a man whose hair is on fire seeks a pond. The trick is to stay single-mindedly focused and move toward your goals with an interminable sense of urgency.

A dispassionate young man once approached the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates and pleaded, “Oh, great Teacher, I come to you for knowledge.” Socrates took the young man down to the sea, waded in with him, and then dunked him under the water for thirty seconds. When he let the young man up for air, Socrates asked him to repeat what he wanted. “Knowledge, oh great One,” he sputtered.

Socrates dunked him again and again, each time for a little longer, until the young man gasped, “Air! I must have air!” “Aha!” the old teacher replied. “When you must have knowledge with the same intensity, you shall have it.”

Your passion will predicate your success over any life challenge. Zeal fuels will. Set some measurable goals and become accountable to someone for attaining them. Reframe your language around your goals. Instead of saying, “I need to accomplish these,” say, “I must accomplish them,” or “I choose now to accomplish them.” Develop a sense of urgency. Anything you want badly enough is within your grasp. Stop *trying* and start *doing*.