

Thankful for Abundance

This week not only represents the start of the holiday season but also the coming together of family and friends. We all come together and sit in front of an amazing spread of food to celebrate how thankful we are for the sacrifices our forefathers made to journey so far and under such risky conditions in order to start a life in this new land, which was not so plentiful at times. They did this, so they could have a level of freedom that they were not experiencing in their home country.



They likely never envisioned how plentiful and varied the food in this new land would eventually become. Since it seems so natural for us to have all this food, we forget it wasn't always this way. We sometimes lose sight of the potential for abundance all around us in all the areas of our lives. If we would just open up to the possibilities that other entrepreneurs and technology have harnessed, we could create vast abundance in our lives. We should be thankful for both what we currently have and also what we could potentially have. We have created this abundance, and we have so much more potential to do it over and over again.

I listened to [Peter Diamandis](#) speak at the E0 Conference in Istanbul this September, and he shared stories of [Abundance](#) (also the name of his book and some of [my blogs](#)). His stories could make your jaw drop, especially when you consider their implications. We have the potential for abundant energy, food, water, education, computing, health care, and freedom. If you

would like to know more about the potential of abundance, read Peter's book or some of my blogs learn more about the abundance we have the capacity to be thankful for tomorrow.

I am thankful for the entrepreneur and that we live in a world filled with them. I am thankful they are passionate about something that drives them to put forth the effort to go out and create these new inventions. This allows us to live in abundance and gives us the potential for so much more.

Go make it happen, my entrepreneur friends, and show the world that a [scarcity mindset](#) is not necessary because we have the ability to live in a world that serves us all.

[How To Be Happy During Challenging Times](#)

When I was in Istanbul, Turkey back in September, I heard [Harvard](#) lecturer and Good Think CEO [Shawn Achor](#) give his presentation focusing on research around happiness. This was fascinating, filled with humor, and centered on the power of happiness can spread and lead to more productive workers. Sharing this now seems very appropriate, given that half the voters out there are not very happy about the outcome of the election. I myself feel like capitalism has been pushed aside in favor of a bigger, more controlling government. I believe economic growth and jobs come from entrepreneurs, and big government only gets in their way, so this doesn't motivate me to do a happy dance. So how can we all increase our happiness during challenging times?

Shawn has written a book called "[The Happiness Advantage](#)," and it explains that our problems with happiness come from our thinking that we will be happy when we get to a certain outcome or level of success. Therefore, any victories or accomplishments get pushed down the road and delay happiness. The problem is that when we get there, the level of success is reset and increased. This leaves us with a feeling of not ever getting to that happy place, so what are we to do?

You can also [click here](#) to watch the video.

Our brains work better when we are positive and function less efficiently when we are neutral or negative. We also have increased intelligence and creativity when we are positive. As empathic beings, when we share a smile it is contagious the same way a frown or depression can be.

How do we become happier, and what can we do to increase happiness among those around us? Shawn shared 6 key areas on simple ways to change your happiness:

- **Gratitude** – write five things that you are grateful for each morning. This refocuses your brain and opens up your awareness to look for the happy things in life.
- **Journaling** – spend three minutes each day for thirty days writing about a positive experience. This has been shown to decrease doctor visits by 50%. You become more social, and your immune system improves.
- **Simplifying vs Multitasking** – do one thing at a time. This is what we are built to do. Multitasking increases stress, which eats away at every organ in our body.
- **Utilizing Strengths** – discover and focus on your strengths. This gives you high levels of energy and productivity with low levels of success.
- **Exercising** – work out. This is as powerful an antidepressant as the pills, and it releases dopamine in the brain, which cause positive and uplifting feelings.

- **Meditation** – relax and just watch your breath go in and out. It changes the way your brain structures itself and changes its electrical impulses. This allows a more balanced and positive feeling.

Shawn also discussed the activation energy that you use to get an activity to really kick in and become a habit. He wanted to play the guitar more but found that having to go into the closet and get it out deterred him. He reduced his activation energy (initial investment of energy necessary to accomplish a task) by placing the guitar in the middle of room. He then played for 28 out of 30 days.

What activity do you want to do to be happier? How are you going to reduce your activation energy and get it done?

[Solving the World's Problems with Abundance](#)

Let's continue our discussion from last week's blog. How does Abundance solve the future problems that seem to loom before us like population growth, water needs, hunger, and power?

Abundance Thinking holds the understanding that we have the capability to solve our pains with the technologies we have already created. Those technologies are at such a level that the continued connectivity of each of them creates exponential opportunities for solving all the issues of the day and the problems out ahead of us.

Click Image below for TED Talk.



When I talk about technologies, I am referring to ubiquitous broadband networks, nanomaterials, digital manufacturing, synthetic biology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and infinite computing. These areas of exploration are a game changer for the world in which we live. For those skeptics out there, let's look at a few examples.

Consider the issue of water needs, which is a major one. [Dean Kamen](#) was working to get sterilized water to dialysis patients, when he realized he could solve a problem of clean water for billions of people by creating the Slingshot. This device is the size of a dorm room refrigerator and has an intake hose and an outflow hose, so you could stick it into anything wet, and out would come pure pharmaceutical grade injectable water for dialysis. Great for drinking also! Anything wet includes salt water, arsenic-laden water, and even the latrine. Can you imagine that?

This ultimately translates into helping to solve the population explosion. How? Most people that have large families are rural farmers that need more people to work their farms. They have more children because they tend to have a higher mortality rate in rural areas without clean drinking water. Solve the water problem, and you take huge steps toward the over-population problem.

Next, let's tackle food. [Vertical farms](#) will change the game here. This would consist of utilizing buildings that would be immune to weather changes, so crops could be grown year round. It would take ten to twenty soil-based acres to produce the same amount of crops as one acre of skyscraper or vertical farm. This also means no pesticides or herbicides to runoff and effect the environment.

Now, we will take a look at the power issue. An updated

version of the [stirling engine](#) can burn almost anything, and it is being used to power things like cell phones and lights. This engine can also power the Slingshot. Guess what powered it during a six month trial in a Bangladesh village? Cow dung!

All these examples prove that we really can solve huge problems and realize how abundance will raise the living standards, save resources, and provide ecological benefit to all on the planet.

If you are wanting to explore this more or still not convinced check out the [TED Talk](#) by [Peter Diamandis](#) or read the [book](#).

[Meetings That Motivate](#)

How many times have you heard “I spend so much time in meetings, I don’t have time to do all the things I say I’m going to do in those meetings”? It’s a constant battle I face, trying to improve our meetings so that they are as productive as possible in the least amount of time, and ultimately beneficial to our business. After all, business is about bringing a group of people together to accomplish something, together. So you could say that these gatherings are one of the most crucial parts of business. It’s difficult to align people without that infamous word “meeting”.

Imagine a US football team in a huddle. Before each play, the offense and defense take a few seconds to analyze where they are, what down it is, what they think the opposing team will do and their own next play options. Next the coach or

quarterback will call out a play that takes everything into consideration. In the same way, when people are brought into a meeting they discuss what they are trying to achieve, what is in the way of achieving that and any progress they have made.

We work diligently to make our meetings productive so that they keep us moving forward, but I find that we still manage to drift a little along the way. Last week after our usual Monday morning meeting with our Team leads in India via video conference, I kept the team together and asked one question. What is standing in the way of us becoming a better company? I set the timer and everyone had 3 minutes to write down their thoughts.

At the end of 3 minutes, one at a time we went around the room, each team member and team lead providing one idea. As we gathered ideas I started a list of them all, and then went back around and each person ranked their top 3. For their first choice, I put 3 marks, second I put 2 marks, and third I put 1 mark. At the end, the ideas with the most points are the most pressing issues, and therefore are the ones that we will begin discussing. As a group we brainstorm possible solutions to the barriers, then finalize what our next step is towards making our company better in that area.



In my experience, meetings provide the best opportunity for true collective intelligence...where ideas feed other ideas, and new ideas grow. Taking the time to talk about pains, stucks, competition or even opportunities, you are supporting the work

of your team and making meetings productive. Research shows that one of the biggest motivators for employees is progress. When you have a productive meeting, your team feels that accomplishment and thereby leaves the meeting more motivated.

Who 's Driving?

Having been in business for a while I've spent a lot of time thinking about what motivates people and what I can be doing to help increase their motivation. I wonder how they get excited about what they do or what outside forces motivate them to want to do more. I have seen the [Carrot and Stick](#) work, and I have seen when it did not push people to do better. This made me wonder if it was the people, the culture or other factors that didn't follow the traditional [Carrot and Stick](#) model.

I've read some of [Daniel Pink's](#) work in the past, but when he wrote [Drive](#) I was excited to see what he had to say about motivation and what drives people to want to do better.

The research says that what worked before is what he is calling [Motivation 2.0](#), and is relevant in an industrial world of parts and pieces. This model isn't so relevant in the newer [Motivation 3.0](#), where knowledge and creativity are the output you are trying to motivate.

Pink says that these 3 elements are necessary for [Motivation 3.0](#): Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose.

When you have Autonomy, you have freedom in the task at hand,

freedom in the time required to complete the task, and freedom within the team working together on that task.

When you have Mastery, people are in “flow” with the work they are doing. They do it with engagement, aspiring to a level of mastery, but knowing that it is hard work and will always be short of fully reachable.

When you have Purpose, there is a cause that is bigger than the individual; it allows the extra effort to be pulled out of people that goes beyond the effort for just a paycheck.

Check out this really cool video that really helps to understand these key points to Motivation 3.0: If you are a creative and knowledge based company, have you noticed issues around motivation? Could the incorporation of more autonomy, mastery, and purpose in your company help?

Realizing Your Purpose

A lot of what happens in business seems to be based on default. What do I mean by default? Well it goes like this: “I lost my job so I went into business myself”, “These clients buy my product so, this is the audience I sell towards”, “I was making all the money for the company, so I decided to go out on my own”, or “I was a really good engineer, carpenter, programmer, haircutter, etc, etc, so I decided to go into business for myself”. This is exciting, but it doesn’t create a great business until you determine its purpose for existence, beyond making a living.

If you’ve ever wondered why it is that other companies seem to

be doing so well, and you are always struggling, it could be because you haven't found or awakened to your true purpose for being in business. Making sure that purpose is always alive in your daily and weekly interactions and the culture of your business is essential to real success.

In my favorite book on leadership called [*Leadership Wisdom from the Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*](#), [Robin Sharma](#) wrote about purpose and why it makes a difference. He used the example of how [Southwest Airlines](#) became great, not because they were charging low fares, but because they had a greater purpose of making it possible for grandparents to see their grandkids and small business to expand their markets. This awareness of a greater purpose allows people to move beyond working just for a paycheck.



Purpose was also a key aspect of [*Built to Last*](#) by [Jim Collins](#) and [Jerry Porras](#). If they were faced with choosing between core purpose and core values for guiding and inspiring an organization, they said they would likely choose core purpose. To them, the core purpose captures the soul of an organization and is like “a guiding star on the horizon – forever pursued, but never reached”. In other words, an organization is always stimulating change and working to move closer to that purpose, but unlike a goal, it's never fully realized.

When a company or organization finds their higher meaning for being in existence, it will align the people and engage their

hearts. With a purpose you can show your organization that their work touches people's lives, directly or indirectly. People tend to work harder where they find fulfillment, and giving your people a purpose for what they do day to day could be just what you need to create an environment where great things are possible.

Have you discovered your core purpose for your company, or possibly for your own life? If not, you should check out this article "[Building Your Company's Vision](#)" by [Jim Collins](#) on how to realize your core purpose.

[What do YOU do when things don't go your way?](#)

If you follow my blog you might remember my mentioning [Nando Parrado](#) several months ago following my trip to the E0 Barcelona University. His story was one of the most inspirational stories of my life, and I really want to follow up on it a little more closely.

Nando's story is about his experience surviving a plane crash and 72 days in the [Andes Mountains](#) before walking out with [Roberto Canessa](#) to save themselves and their rugby teammates. It's difficult for me to convey to you how powerful his story is, but here are the highlights (I highly recommend reading his [book](#) or watching the [movie](#)):

Nando is told there is extra space on the plane flying his rugby team to Argentina, so he offers a few spots to his mother and sister. The plane crashed into the side of a

mountain and the back half was lost. Nando woke from a concussion to find his mother was lost with the back half of the plane and his sister in critical condition (she died shortly after). The only food they had were a few packs of peanuts, rationed at something like one peanut a day. The temperature was so absurdly cold that they slept on each other and took turns breathing on one another to keep warm.

They assumed they would be rescued, and they'd only need to survive a few days. 10 days into it, however, they heard the radio broadcast that the search was called off. Not too long after, an avalanche came, burying the place, killing a few of the survivors, and injuring a few others. It took them days to dig out, and they were forced to survive on the bodies of the dead to make it through the worst part of winter.

As spring approached, they decided the only way to survive was to send someone out to find help. Nando and Roberto volunteered, thinking that they were on the far edge of the mountains and that they would find civilization just past the first ridge. In reality, the first mountain cap only revealed another, and after that, sheer ice. With mountain tops as far as they could see, they trudged onward for 10 days and 45 miles of frozen wilderness until they saw life – a farmer on a horse across the river, which ultimately led to the rescue of the remaining survivors.

The past few years the world has seen a lot of stress. We've seen multi-million dollar industries crumble and experienced a dangerous level of unemployment. Losing a job, getting a divorce, no customers are buying what you offer, everyone on your team hates each other, can feel like the world is coming down on you, but when you look at Nando's experience, would you trade circumstances? Nando's story puts life's troubles into perspective...and reminds us that the only alternative is to keep moving forward, even if you don't know exactly where you're going.

Nando went on to run a successful business, but it wasn't all cake and ice cream. He dealt with tough situations the same as the rest of us. In dealing with adversity, he says "Sometimes things do not go in the direction that I want them to go, but I keep moving on regardless. I look at the situation through the storm, always going forward one step at a time."

Sometimes only a clown shoe fits...



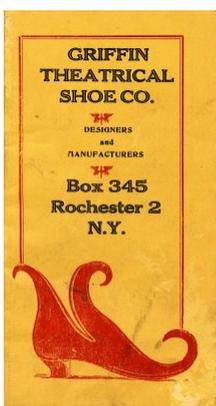
When I was about 13 years old I had a neighbor named John Buckholtz. Mr. Buckholtz made clown shoes for a living, a family business that dated back to 1873. His grandfather was [Raymond Griffin](#), the son of [James R. Griffin](#), who originally founded [Griffin Theatrical Shoe Co.](#) By the time the business was handed down to Mr. Buckholtz, he was one of less than a handful of clown shoemakers in the world, and arguably the only one who still custom made them by hand.



(NY21-PUB.) THE LAUGHER IS STILL ON—This is Felix Adler in his grotesque clown's costume that evoked the laughter of millions—young and old—during his nearly half-century under circus big tops. The great laugh maker died today at 65 while undergoing an operation in a New York hospital. He began his career as a boy of 13 with Ringling Bros., and stayed with them until last spring. (AP Wirephoto) 6/17/36 ML:1966 (SEE 'A' WITH STORY)

Occasionally I would do yard work for Mr. Buckholtz for extra money. Over time he recognized my work ethic and desire to learn, so one day he offered to teach me how to make clown shoes. With my mother's permission and a nervous enthusiasm, I accepted, unaware of what was in store for me.

Mr. Buckholtz showed me the ropes, and helped me learn the process from start to finish. We cut the leather for the soles, ran the wax down the string to create the stitching, and with the colorful tops, stitched them together. It was amazing watching it all come together, and left me in awe learning how you could create something from nothing.



I walked away from this experience with two things that are with me to this day. One is the scar on my forehead that I would have been happy to leave behind. I got it from pressing so hard to get the awl through the leather to stitch them together that the strap you place on your foot came off and the nail flew up and hit me in the head. The second is the

power and beauty of watching something manifest from nothing. It's more than making clown shoes...it's like a song that began as nothing more than a pen and paper, or a painting that started as an empty canvas. Piece by piece we built something of value, something that would mean something to someone.



Nowadays I see this same beauty in entrepreneurism. It starts as a vision, or an idea, but we craft our decisions and actions to create something that fills a need for others. Mr. Buckholtz's family business lasted over 100 years, and did so out of the quality and customization they provided their clients. It's interesting how we have come full circle from back when most all retailers were small and specialty to progressing in the industrial age to mass manufacturing and now back again to the specialty shops thriving by customizing to their clients respective needs. Can some form of customization help distinguish your product or service ([the purple cow](#)) and keep the competition at bay?

Entrepreneurs Don't Care,

Just Like the Honey Badger!

I kept hearing and seeing the slogan “The Honey Badger Don’t Care” in email jokes, on television, and from various people. You may have seen it during the college [National Championship Game between Alabama and LSU](#). You may have seen the signs referring to LSU player #7 [Tyrann Mathieu](#) as the Honey Badger.

This all started because of a video called [“The Crazy Nastyass Honey Badger”](#) by Randall (strong language; use viewer discretion). Given its popularity, you have likely seen it by now. If not, this video is really funny, but more importantly, it is a very intriguing story from an entrepreneurial perspective.

First of all, the video simply shows footage of a Honey Badger with voice over commentary by Randall that has gone viral (almost 34 million views). This has landed Randall a spot in the cartoon movie as well as a stuffed animal being sold with his voice. He also has a [Honey Badger game app](#) and has landed a book deal. The Honey Badger may not care, but Randall did. He cared enough to go out and take advantage of the opportunity he created for himself, turning something fun into what appears to be big money.

As I think about the slogan “the Honey Badger don’t care,” I see a mindset that an entrepreneur sustains when he or she is getting started. The entrepreneur don’t care . . . that he is unfunded, lacks experience in the marketplace, doesn’t have a team in place, doesn’t have any customers, is told he can’t do it, is not smart to quit his job, doesn’t have another source

of income, and he still sees an opportunity and goes out there and makes it happen.

Now, you may be thinking that this was just a stroke of luck, and that this guy's lottery ticket got called up. No, I don't see it that way just as I don't see the success of most entrepreneurs as luck. The real story is that Randall's dad was a camera man for [Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom](#), and since the age of seven, Randall would narrate the films for the family when his dad would come home from these exotic trips. They would go to the zoo frequently, and he would tell stories of all the animals at the zoo. His big success came from living what he loved to do!

This is the case with most of us! We live in such a way that our passion and love for the things we do puts up in the path of opportunities that have not yet been seen, and then those that decide they really want it "honey badger" away working toward success.

What are you passionate enough about that that you don't care what gets in your way and won't let anything stop you?

6 Factors to Spotting Potential

A few weeks back when we were visiting our office in India, we took a few days and flew on over to Bangalore to attend the [E0](#) India regional event called [RIE](#). The India [E0](#) events are always a great time, as they're known for bringing in fascinating speakers and holding dinner events in

extraordinary places such as castles, old forts or roof top venues. This year, staying true to their reputation, they brought in [Praful Patel](#), the Minister of State for Civil Aviation, [Vijay Mallya](#), the Chairman of Kingfisher Airlines and [Rasmus Ankersen](#), a self proclaimed high performance anthropologist.

The latter, Mr. Ankersen, was especially intriguing to me. He has done some very unorthodox research around the world to back up his hypothesis of determining how to spot potential in someone when it may not be presently visible. Ankersen is a native of Denmark, has written 3 bestselling books and has been in training camps in Moscow, Jamaica, Africa and Brazil (to name a few) to train with and help produce some of the most successful athletes worldwide.

Ankersen traveled to Moscow to study the training of the top tennis players in the world. He went to Jamaica to study the best sprinters in the world, to Kenya for the best long distance athletes, and Korea for the best female golfers in the world.

Checkout [this video](#) of Ankersen discussing his theory.

His research thus far has resulted in some key factors in spotting potential:

1) Always look behind a performance.

To determine what caused a performance, you have to see what was behind the performance itself. Was it raw talent that can be coached, or was it pure technique and heart without much raw talent?

2) Magnify what you can see.

Look at what you have and don't let it be static. A vision of what is possible with someone is important to see where the future is with them.

3) Know Yourself.

Know your capabilities, and know the difference between what you can improve and what you can't change. If you are gifted at growing managers of people on a business team and have a candidate with amazing analytical skills, but low people skills, you could develop their people skills, but couldn't contribute much to the growth of their analytical skills.

4) Give hunger greater priority than ability.

Hunger is something that you can't teach, and is much harder to pull out of someone than the skills necessary to be the best. If two people have the same basic skills, the one that demonstrates the hunger is the one you should be watching.

5) Stay Open Minded.

In order to do this, it requires that you not judge a candidate that may take more time to mature. Keep people curious about their potential and don't feed them negatives that can hold them back.

6) Have the courage to believe in potential.

It requires courage to believe that you can take someone that is not yet there and ripen them to reach their potential, even if it will take time. In our India office, we seek the candidates that are hungry to grow and learn, even if they possess less experience in software skills, and bring them along to blossom into their full potential.

Listening to Ankersen's talk made me see the similarities between being a coach and being a manager. If you have a camp that consistently leads with medals, then it says something about the opportunity to grow the talent that is around you. What are you doing to pull out the best in the people around you?

Here's [another video](#) of one of Ankersen's interviews.