



Foundational Ideas Series

NON-OBLIGATION AND PASSION MATCHING



Non-Obligation and Passion Matching



Community for Change: Foundational Ideas Series

FEBRUARY, 2017

It is 6:12:00 AM this February morning and here I am, in my hometown Pleasantville, NY, drinking coffee and listening to the Gin Blossoms while the rest of the world wakes up...

Today I am writing in hopes of sharing just exactly how deeply we believe in non-obligation as a critical building block for the Community for Change.

This is important to keep in mind as we will be sending out opportunities to the community with the intention to create or inspire passion-matching. Yet, no one is obligated to participate in something if they do not feel a particular opportunity is the right fit.

With this non-obligation in mind, we reeeeeaaaally want people to feel comfortable along with the freedom to say “no” whenever they aren’t a match for something!

We see freedom and non-obligation as bricks on a path toward passion, joy, and effectiveness.

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A story from my youth about obligation versus passion...

Well... I may be part of a small group of approximately seven billion people that reeeeeaaallllly don't like to be told what to do... :)

Geez... That's an opener, huh?

My mom taught me (indirectly) the distinction between 'obligation' and 'freedom to choose.' I also learned that there is a big difference in the two parallel worlds, created by 'obligation' and 'freedom to choose' which creates a disparity in the amount of passion and energy that is released in each world.

My mom taught me so, so much. And I don't think she even meant to teach me about obligation versus passion.



As a young kid, I recall the MASSIVE difference that I felt when my mom told me to go cut the grass VERSUS when I decided myself, without orders, that I truly wanted our family home to look really great so I WANTED to cut the grass...

This isn't a metaphor.

I took over grass cutting duties from my brother Drew around age 9 in Penfield (a suburb of Rochester, New York) and at first it was a brilliant rite of passage... but, it quickly it became a "chore".

Aye ye ye.

What a difference.

There were two ways grass cutting was accomplished...

SCENARIO #1: OBLIGATION

My mom said, "Pip... I want you to get out there and cut the grass today."

There was no use of the common parental words I hear often: "ok?" as in "Pip... I want you to get out there and cut the grass today... ok?" None of THAT. My mom wasn't the type that inspired a conversation about the grass cutting. This wasn't an "idea". This was a directive. And it sucked. My mom had a rule for us kids: "No back talk!" Which might be akin to "no complaints, discussions, ideas..."

That is the short version of method #1 called "mom's directive = obligation".

SCENARIO #2: PASSION (NON-OBLIGATION)

The second way that the grass got cut was that I decided to cut it!

I was such a passion-filled kid (that will not likely be a surprise to you all) and there were MANY instances that I decided that I wanted to cut the grass! Sometimes I would think:

"Hey... Today I am going to cut the grass in a pattern, like major league baseball fields! I may even double cut it like they do on golf courses to create the greatest looking front yard in the history of Penfield, NY!"

And I DID!



Not only that, but I would even wash the mower afterwards (which likely wasn't good for the motor, I suspect). I would then trim the edges and hedges in addition to removing old leaves from under the lilac bushes that lined the left side of the backyard that de-marked the property line between our and the Okamura's property.

It was all so, so fun!

When winter came around and shovelling snow became the chore, I can only reveal that by 10 years old, I was a master — a man among boys and a boy who could put the men of the neighborhood to shame. I can still wield a shovel like an NFL linebacker demolishes unsuspecting running backs. Of course today I might risk a heart attack, so we use a plowing service. ;)

I was so on top of shovelling snow... (which there was a LOT of in Rochester - see attached picture from the Winter of 1977) and so ahead of my years, I don't recall my mom EVER asking me to shovel the snow as a 10-year-old...



Above Photo: Winter of 1977 in Rochester, NY

I was always ahead of her.

Joyous.

Ok, ok... to pull back from my childhood remembrances before I get crazy revealing my election as the youngest child inductee into the snow shovelling hall of fame, there is a point that ties into the Community for Change (“phewww” says Brynne)!

When I DECIDED to cut the grass, I had a blast. There was ZERO obligation! There was joy. And the work seemed light and there was even an “I GET to do THIS! Way neat!”

Seriously.

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We want NON-OBLIGATION to be perhaps THE core distinctive value of the Community for Change above anything else. We want passion-matching, joy, and fun to be unleashed. Thus, we will be on the look-out for words of obligation which might include...

- “It’s your DUTY”,
- “It’s your responsibility”,
- “He helped you last year so you SHOULD help him this year...”,
- “We are EXPECTED to...”

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These words are obligation-terms and I suspect they often foreshadow resentment.

I don’t want the Community for Change efforts to ever be associated with resentment.

We have the framework that the strongest communities are generated from passion as opposed to obligation. We see passion every single day within our community and we seek to serve as ‘nurturers of connections’ in order to help the community further develop those passions or discover new ones.

So in order to foster a passion-filled, action-oriented, non-obligatory space, we want to create an environment where the following words flow EASILY without any friction:

“No thanks, I am not interested...”

I want it to be TOTALLY safe to say: “No thanks!”

...when we might offer an opportunity.

We would then know that any participation comes from a great, great spirit.

So... here is our powerful call-to-action that is likely not found I suspect in many marketing/sales guidebooks:

Pleeeeeeassee say “no thanks” if something doesn’t work or is not of significant interest.

The only way I will personally be disappointed is if I learn after the fact that you participated in something of the Community for Change, but really didn’t want to.

— PIP

