

BEING PROACTIVE VERSUS REACTIVE – THE SOLUTION OF SELF- GOVERNMENT

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The one who wants to lead the others, first has to lead himself!

Philip Massinger

Abstract: Starting from selfknowing and the law of correspondence (the behaviour from the outside of one person is the reflection of its inside feelings) the authors try to define the meaning of proactivity. It is underlined that as we have the quality to be human beings we are responsible for our lives. The proactive persons do not blame the environment or the circumstances to justify their behaviour. As it was implanted in the literature of management, the meaning of proactivity is based on initiative, on responsibilities and actions; this gives priority to values in front of any feelings.

Key words: proactive, reactive, responsibility, rationalism, hope, life fulfillment.

In one of his most recent articles, Michael Gerber, the famous business advisor said that businesses do not fail because of “uncontrolled forces” (exogenous) as competition, lack of financial resources or employees less hardworking. It is presumed that they fails because only of internal causes. When going on with business development he says that a business “reflects” the person leading the business. To put it into other words the business persons have to lead their business and do not let their business to lead them. As a conclusion, he said: “If you want your business changes into a successful one it is you that has to change”¹ as a first priority. And Gerber is definitely right! In order to have success in whatever we do, to run a business, to rise and educate children, to train the judo team of the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest, we have to be the managers of our own life, not to let us be lead by our actions! That means to take the challenge of a proactive attitude that might be definitely oriented towards success and achievement.

Our decision to be in the control of our life is the seed for our success². Controlling your own life is similar with „being proactive”. The proactive concept comes from the well-known words: pro (for); active (act). Act proactively is the sound of not sitting, passively, beside and look at it, but do something.

A Volkswagen TV commercial uses to keeps our eyes busy telling that there are “two kinds of people on the road of life: drivers and passengers”. This commercial presents the drivers to us, in having the control of their own life. From this perspective, they are proactive people. In opposition to the rivers, the

passengers take only a walk. They are reactive people that behave as simple witnesses of their lives. You and us, together, we have problems if we think about the facts that we can not control:

- Could the paper for Oradea be a successful one?
- Could the evaluation for the Faculty of Economy be done according to the imposed standards?
- Could we, the authors' team, get the contract for „Social Stress” financed?
- Could we be happier today than we were during the last years?

All these are the fruits of our lives. Do we need to focus on them? No! Focusing on them could induce us more worries, fears, manipulation etc.³. Keeping on to thinking this way, the natural question could be: what is the best way to face that reality? It is highly better and recommended to focus on things that we can control: a fair attitude, a high and determined strong persuasion, and a strong commitment. This is why, if we are able to focus, hold and use our emotional energy (our feelings) in a positive way⁴ the pro-activity will become really efficient.

Specialists like to talk about the so-called „tree of life” and the different approaches in life. Thus, the proactive human beings are focused on the „roots” (the universal principles) while the reactive persons are focused on „fruits” (results). We can do a similitude between our inside battery that we use to face the reality or the flame of hope and our attitude as victims facing life.

If we are proactive – using initiative and action – the flame of hope, our inside battery could give us energy. And us, as human beings, we have the possibility to choose. There are not too many ways to make our behavioral choice when the temptation is around:

- We might choose to behave as persons that only react - and they will definitely become the future victims;
- We might choose to behave as fighters, those persons able to take control of their own life and go for success.⁵

Talking about stress, a recent study emphasizes a particular definition referring that the stress is a normal part of reality⁶. The stress is that pressure that we feel it in our life as an important part of. We can react to stress in two ways: as victims – persons who suffer (reactions); as winners – persons who are active.

For any people it is simple to manage their own lives, if we consider also the fact that life is usually given to any of us and we are not their possessors. The book „Rationality and hope”⁷ develops the following axioms with regard at Life:

- Axiom 1: Life is short (transition);
- Axiom 2: Nature is stingy (rationality);
- Axiom 3: Environment is uncertain (hope).

Trying to put these statements into mathematical equations we understand and must agree that, each of us has a certain period of time (Δt) to spend on this earth, where:

$$\Delta t = t_e - t_b$$

t_e – end of life time; t_b – birth time (existing as a result of birth).

During this period of time we can manage our patrimony, time, abilities, potential, and finances – all the gifts (assets) we were given at birth⁸.

Too busy to live a common life, the great majority of people forgets about Axiom 1 and forget its essence. Ignoring the deep meaning of a potential miss they forget behaving in a responsible to preserve and save their life. This kind of people prefers to catch the general tendency of blaming the others for their own problems while expecting from them to have good initiatives, appropriate mainly for themselves⁹. Easy to understand, more difficult to accept this becomes easily the fundamental reason of the most people failure. Those people keep forgetting that controlling their own life has the significance of appreciating and using that quality that each of us was enabled with, by birth: to choose between the two fundamental ways of life. All that we have to do is to use better what we were given as a gift: life. The way to accomplishment, fulfillment and success is marked by change. And we need to learn the change and focus on what we can change.

Jim Rohn, the well-known business philosopher demonstrates that changing life means changing the way of thinking (life's philosophy)¹⁰. Thinking this way he brings into actuality the confirmation of Solomon sayings about "we are what we think we are". By this saying we consider that success is for everybody and it really is. But this success depends on self-government, and this last one is the way we run on our own existence.

Peter Drucker, a great personality in the world of management, says the followings: „In fact are about an unprecedented change for the human beings conditions. For the first time – literally many people, and the numbers increase everyday, have the possibility to choose. For the first time in the history of human being, they have to face a great need, and that is self-government. But society is totally unprepared for this"¹¹. The way how we lead (self-governing) our own life depends on the quality of principles of actions on which we build our life. They may last in the following 9 *principles* adding value:

1. ***Listen to every piece of information that can bring value to your future decisions and remember the old adage:*** People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. It is still true today. Most people in business aren't impressed with what you know. They are more impressed with what you remember about them. Learn to listen more than talk. Most sales and customer service success stories involve successful listening skills. It has helped.

2. ***Do your homework.*** Today you have more information about people at your fingertips than at any time in human history. Use the internet to research every aspect of your client. I worked for a client one time that called me to do a presentation. I couldn't figure out what they did in their industry. Several clicks later I was an authority on their business.

3. ***Dress for success.*** What image does your clothing and appearance say about you and your business? Who would want to do business with someone who had a disheveled or lowly appearance? You shouldn't only look great, feel great!

4. ***Always be on time.*** There is no excuse for showing up late for a meeting with a busy client. Never tolerate missed deadlines or late arrivals in your performance in business. It tells people they aren't important. Get a watch and check it frequently. Find out how long it takes to get to the appointment if you are traveling. Don't allow phone calls, drop-in visits or traffic to make you tardy for the most important meeting of the day.

5. ***Listen more than talk.*** This isn't a repeat of Step 1. This is for the actual meeting. Let your partner taking the lead in conversation. You can do this by asking questions that require more than one-word answers. Who is in control of a conversation: the person asking the questions, or the person answering them? Obviously the person asking the questions is in charge. Use the homework you did to ask great questions. It's been said that no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. You show you care by asking questions about them and listening to the answers.

6. ***Remember people's names and details.*** People like hearing their name spoken. Again it makes them feel important. Don't over do it but use their name in the conversation at specific moments to emphasize points. They will appreciate hearing their name spoken. If you have trouble remembering names, use simple techniques like repetition, association or just write them down in a convenient place you can access discreetly. Use the research you have done in your homework to ask about family members, their history with the corporation or their life. Everyone likes talking about themselves and even more they like hearing that you are interested in them and their lives.

7. ***Be truthful.*** Never tell a lie or stretch the truth so that you have to spend the rest of your time covering for yourself. Most people can tell when you are lying to them. Tell the truth even if it is painful. They will appreciate your honesty in the long run. It will build a reputation for you that no resume or marketing campaign can equal. Being known in the business community as an honest man or woman endears you to every person you come in contact with. The word of mouth that your honesty generates will come back to you exponentially. One lie told can ruin your reputation and your business may never recover. It is easier to just always tell the truth.

8. ***Find common ground.*** As you listen to your partner, look for similar interests or backgrounds. I met with a gentleman last month who not only grew up in my home town but in my suburb. Wow! We spent most of the time connecting with our common past and it made both of us feel better about doing business with one another. Common Ground = Trust. Trust is the foundation for an open relationship that will grow your (and their) business. Look for hobbies, sports, educational interests, cultural commonalities that will bind the two of you into a growing business relationship that will be that foundation for trust.

9. **Show confidence.** Be positive about your strengths without over-doing it. This will make a great impression on everyone you come in contact with. People can smell someone with low-self esteem. Your appearance says a lot but your remarks about yourself and your abilities can be sensed before you ever say a word. It is alright to occasionally use self-deprecating remarks in humor but once should be enough in any business arrangement. Just doing it twice leaves a negative impression. Don't bowl people over but show an air of confidence that leaves everyone thinking that you can be depended upon to deliver the goods you say you can. Never underestimate the power of a positive attitude in any situation and conversation.

Use these steps the next time you want to make a great first impression. You will be surprised at the results they generate. Your business will improve and your bottom line will increase.

Talking success and fulfillment many people bring into discussion the importance of the laws of physics that govern the Universe as the universal principles govern human existence. The principles are long lasting truth: universal, absolute, non-negotiable. They are as valid as the law of gravitation. Here are some of them: the law of cause and effect; the law of correspondence; the law of compensation; the law of attraction etc.¹²

We can not understand them, we can not accept them but all these things do not disable them. These principles do not vanish. All these principles remain stable on position.

So, we have to choose:

- We shall discover and totally accept them, and we may succeed in life as we wish;
- We shall ignore them and fail, without knowing why we did fail.

So, what we have to follow in our way to find success is truth, reflected by these Universal laws.

The truth is more important than the „fruits” wished by many others (see figure no. 1)

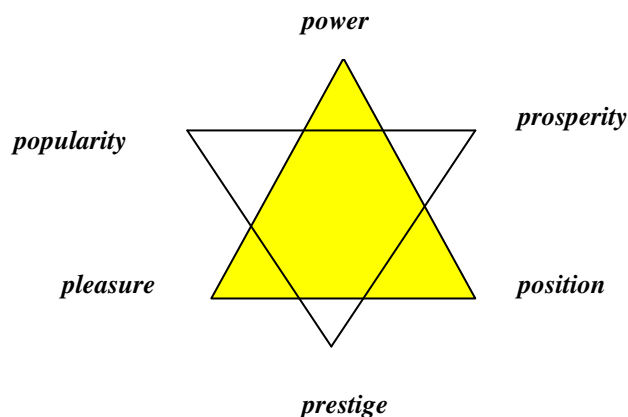


Figure no. 1: The fruits of life, wished by many people

This is the „basket” of the six P. The only truth is the real source of the fulfillment of life. If we want to succeed in life we must passionately look for truth and find how we have to use it in our life¹³. This is wisdom. On a better analysis of the word we can see that „wise” means „having and sharing knowledge”. Learn from experience is another way to do the home work. And make a choice. As experience is a great but painful teacher, it might be some other better choices than to suffer and this may be given to them the benefit of some mentoring or coaching. This helps to face serious development and life decisions.”

As Bud Bilanich says there five things all successful people have in common:

- Successful people are self confident.
- Successful people have powerful personal impact.

- Successful people are outstanding performers.
- Successful people have excellent communication skills.
- Successful people are interpersonally competent.

Many people do not make definite choices or decisions in their lives. Choose how you want your life to be. Choose how you want to be. Make a definite decision. It is only through making the choice, the decision that you will be able move towards what you want. If you do not do so, then you are going all over the place and dissipating your power. But when you do choose then you have formed a definite thought about what you want.

With this definite thought in place you will start moving towards that which you want. Holding this definite thought in your mind, focusing on this thought is what makes it come in to being. You are empowered in your life if you make the choice and hold the definite thought in your mind for then you are have the power of your mind to make your life and yourself as you choose and want it to be.

This is where your power lies. This is what meant by being empowered. This is all that it takes to be empowered in your life. It is simple, yet it takes effort. For you have a habit of thinking a certain way and you have to break the habit of those thoughts and form new thoughts.

As you practice doing this and forming a habit of being cognizant of what your thoughts are then you will become empowered in your life. When you are accomplished at doing this, then you will have a mastery of your life.

You have to be in control of your mind and thoughts. You have to be in charge and responsible for your self and not look to someone else or something outside of you to be so. You have the power within you through your thoughts. It is your inherent gift. If you want to be empowered in your life, if you want to change your life, use your gift. But they keep thinking that hearing or listening is the same with understanding while knowing could be transform into understanding. And as a rule we understand less than we know. For wiser it is easier to understand how to manage the own life. But there is also a time problem inside this idea. Now, today, have a serious and accurate meaning when deciding that with tomorrow you are ready to take your life in your own hands, you are in control of your life. That means you shall be in self-governance. It will be better for to forgetting that you have already said tomorrow meanings is less in front of today this one the first day of your life (Res(Δ)):

$$\text{Res}(\Delta t) = t_a - t_k; k = 0, 1, 2, \dots, n$$

Going back to our 1st axiom, in order to get in control of our life, first we must get in control of our time, so Res (Δt).

This is not too much in reaching the best of the conclusions of the present case: Life each second of your life in the best proactive way!

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