

Seeing Red Cars Transcript

Introduction

You could be getting more of what you want.

More new ideas. More teamwork in your department. A more positive attitude in the company.

I'm Laura Goodrich. I believe that people want to be successful in their jobs, relationships, throughout their communities. I believe that people want to be a part of something productive, something positive.

I believe that people want to build the life they want.

Too often it doesn't work out that way.

Through my work as a coach and advisor, I've learned something important: We get more of whatever we focus on.

Let me say it again. We get more of whatever we focus on.

Seeing Red Cars

I call it, seeing red cars.

Say you recently bought your dream car. Custom wheels, full chrome bumpers, and it's red.

Driving it home for the first time you start to notice something. It seems like there are a lot of red cars out there. The next day what do you notice? There are definitely more red cars on the road. By the end of the first week you're thinking, "Is everyone driving a red car?"

You're seeing red cars.

You're seeing red cars because that's what you're focused on.

Or how about this:

It's every golfer's nightmare.

You're standing at the signature hole. Elevated tee to a large green. A short par three. Only 140 yards. Over water. Lots of water.

You take out your pitching wedge. Stare at the water.

You take a long, last look at your ball and you're thinking, "don't hit it in the water, don't hit it in the water."

Finally you hit the ball. And where does it go?

Ok, one more example to make the point. One of your co-workers is really getting on your nerves.

To make it worse, you keep running into this person, in every meeting, in the hallway, at lunch, in the parking lot. You can't escape.

Who's putting all those thoughts of red cars, don't go in the water, and I can't get away from this person into your head?

You are, of course. It's what you're focused on.

And remember what I said: whether good or bad, you always get more of what you focus on.

continued...

What Do You Want?

In my coaching, I've discovered something quite amazing. When I'm working with someone, I always start with the question: What do you want?

I'm trying to get a read on their vision for their future. I'm trying to understand what they see for themselves, their people, and their organization.

Surprisingly, I don't hear people saying:

"I want to help new employees.

Or, I want to take more risks.

Or, I'd like to get along better with my co-workers."

That may be what we think, but it's not always what we say.

Again, when I ask people what they want, repeatedly, they don't tell me what they want. Without hesitation, they say, "what I don't want is this."

"Well, I don't want people to be gone that day."

"Don't want to be stood up at meetings, don't want to waste my time."

"What I don't want to have happen is to have too much inventory in there."

"Don't want them to keep just throwing it back on us."

You see what's going on? We place our focus on what we don't want.

And since we get more of what we focus on, what do you think really happens?

We create more of what we don't want and we don't even realize we're doing it.

You don't want conflict, but you get more arguments.

You don't want to look foolish, and you look, well... foolish.

You don't want to lose that sale. And you lose that sale.

In other words, you say to yourself: "don't hit it in the water," and you do.

We get more of what we focus on!

We Get More Of What We Focus On.

Focusing on what we don't want has a reach far greater than we realize. It seems to be our natural tendency and it's been going on a long time.

Do you remember third grade reading class? Most people I talk to say they remember the same thing: sitting with your group at the reading table. Everyone has to read out loud, and pretty soon, it's your turn.

Chances are, while your classmates are reading, you weren't even listening. You were mentally counting how many more students before it's your turn.

You know. Your fear builds, your fingers tremble, and you can't stop thinking how hard it is. Finally, it's your turn.

*** Little girl trying to read ***

One agonizing word at a time, you somehow get through the paragraph. And you make it through the day, and you make it through third grade, and it doesn't ever really go away.

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Now you've moved from the classroom to the conference room. They're not your classmates, they're your colleagues. You're all supposed to give your reports.

And you're doing it again. Wondering which direction they're going to start. Counting down until it's your turn.

You're still focused on not wanting to make a mistake, on not wanting to look foolish, and your heart pounds.

Why does this happen?

Why do we spend time and energy dealing with fear and obstacles instead of taking action to move in the right direction?

It's so simple we can recognize it in others, yet so subtle, we don't always realize it in ourselves.

That's the problem; we don't realize that we're focused on what we don't want.

Listen, you know what you don't want. So forget about it. Move in the opposite direction. One small shift will make a big difference.

It's not going to be easy. The hard work is focusing on what you want to happen, and not on what you're trying to avoid.

We get more of what we focus on.

The Three Steps

Here are three steps to get you started.

Begin by making a commitment.

Make a commitment to focus on what you want instead of what you don't want.

Say what you want. Focus on that goal.

More important than the words you say to others, are the words you say to yourself.

The next step is to monitor yourself.

Become aware of what you're focusing on and focus on what you can control, instead of what you can't.

Celebrate your successes, no matter how small.

And catch yourself when your thoughts, your actions, and your words don't line up.

The final step is to practice.

Be persistent.

Write it down. Write down very specifically what you want. Make a contract with yourself.

Now picture it in your mind. Once you see it clearly, you'll start taking action and move toward what you want.

Small successes and large achievements all start the same way. Somebody focuses on what they want, and by doing that, they make it happen.

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Cliff Young Story

Let me tell you a story.

In 1983, Cliff Young decided to run the Sidney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon Race. The six-day, 875 kilometer run is considered to be the world's toughest race. That's over 500 miles! Only the most elite runners are up to the challenge.

Ready to go, Cliff Young, a 61 year old farmer is wearing a sweater and galoshes.

When the marathon starts, the runners leave Cliff and his galoshes behind. The crowds laugh because he appears to be shuffling his feet instead of running correctly. Mockingly, it's called the Cliff Young Shuffle.

But because he never read a book on racing, because he never talked to another runner, at night when everyone else is sleeping, he shuffles right by them. Non-stop for five and a half days.

He didn't know there was a limit. He didn't know he wasn't supposed to do that. He just knew what he wanted, focused on that, and kept running.

Cliff Young won that race. He broke the record by nine hours.

Today most of the runners who compete in an ultra marathon still do the Cliff Young Shuffle.

Cliff Young's story is one of dedication and determination and a clear example of achieving success through focusing on what you want.

You know what your options are: More of what you don't want, or more of what you want.

It's time to make the right choice. Focus on what you really do want. It's waiting out there for you.

The End

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