



Monkey Business

Better Business Practices Learned Through Monkeys

Guests

In 2010, Maryland experienced two record breaking snowfalls within the same week during the month of February. Where I live in Ellicott City, about 4 ½ feet blanketed the ground and fairly made every neighbor's yard look as good as the next. On the first day, many remained inside because shoveling seemed futile. It seemed to be accumulating as fast as you could shovel. When the first blizzard ended on the second day, you could see people starting to come out to work on their driveways. You couldn't walk over to chat, because you couldn't get there. By the third day, a few paths had been dug between neighbor's houses. The neighbors to the right of us lost their power. They did not take us up on our offer to sleep in beds in a warm house, but they made sure they could get here for the Super Bowl. So, the Super Bowl Trail was dug and was a vital part of us all keeping our sanity! We still did not have access to the road and hadn't seen a plow in a couple of days. In our hunger to connect with other people, Facebook was hopping with all the other snowed in Marylanders. Most people were in the complaint mode, feeling victimized by Mother Nature. Being snowed-in here in Maryland is just such a rare occurrence. People did not know how to just BE with it. We are called *Human Beings*, but most of us are far from it. We are mostly *Human Doings*.

During the storms, I checked in at least twice per day with the Sanctuary to make sure everyone was okay. Colleen and Scott still had 75 animals to care for, with many of them living in outside enclosures. They certainly could not just sit and BE with the storm. Lives were depending on them to be fed and given water. It was a Major, Major effort for just two people to dig trails and to be able to get to everyone and make sure all the animals were still secure and no damage had been done to any of the enclosures.

On about the third day, while everyone was complaining on Facebook and planning island get-away's to take them to warm sunny places, Isadora went through her tunnel to the outside part of her enclosure to check on her terrain (Isadora is a Black and White Capuchin Monkey, born November 22, 1996). What was her reaction? She screamed! She screamed at the snow! If she were on the World Wide Web, you would have seen very upset posts from her on Facebook!



Isadora

Many Maryland business owners had to shut down for a couple of days. Even if they could get to work, most of the staff

and customers could barely get out their front doors. The Governor was urging people not to drive. In Washington, federal agencies stayed closed for four straight days. Some counties and suburbs even pulled the plows off the road because of unsafe conditions. Reactions to all of this went from one end of the scale to the other. While some were able to take advantage of this time to increase internet sales and networking, others were worried, frustrated, antsy, or angry. The truth is, on any typical day, snow or no snow, we can experience these same emotions. The last four emotions I listed feel unpleasant. Trying to ignore those feelings can often make them even worse. How can one shift to a more pleasant, positive feeling emotion when they are in the midst of anger or upset? Acknowledge the anger. Don't ignore it.

Emotions just want to be heard. They want to be recognized and until you recognize the unpleasant feeling emotion, it will stick around. They are just like people. Imagine each one of your emotions as a guest that shows up at your house. Some you would like to have stay for a long time. With others, you want their visit to be brief. Author, speaker, and Co-founder of the Tai Sophia Institute in Laurel, MD, Dianne Connelly, shares a practice for acknowledging unpleasant emotions in order to shift them to more pleasant feeling emotions. Let's say *anger* shows up as your guest today. You say, "Oh hello Anger, I know you. You have been here before. Come on in and we'll have a cup of tea together. But you can't stay all day. I'm expecting other guests." It is amazing how quickly anger will leave once you have recognized and honored him as a guest for a short visit.

Rumi, a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, theologian, and Sufi mystic, offered this wisdom so long ago in his Poem, Guest House:

Rumi - Guest House

This being human is a guest house
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

So Isadora, our Capuchin teacher in this column was just honoring one of her guests. And this guest did not stay all day.

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