

90-Day Prosperity Experiment Lab Report

Day 72 — *Putting Others First*

“The first step to leadership is servanthood..”

— John Maxwell

Today’s Message

In August 1914, shortly before the outbreak of the World War I, British explorer Sir Earnest Shackleton and a crew of 27 men set sail from England on the *HMS Endurance*. Their mission was to travel to Antarctica and be the first to cross the continent.

Though meticulous planning went into preparing for the expedition, before the men could reach their destination, the ship became hopelessly locked in the frozen Antarctic waters just off Elephant Island, thereby holding Shackleton and his crew captive in an icy prison for almost two years. What is amazing is that even though the constantly shifting ice eventually crushed and sunk the ship, not one crew member was lost.

In fact, there is very little about this remarkable expedition that would not be considered amazing. Near the end of their 22-month ordeal, Shackleton and five of his crew members, including Frank Worsley, the skipper of the *Endurance*, struck out in an open life boat in hopes of reaching a distant whaling station, traveling eight hundred miles across stormy, ice-strewn seas. Seventeen days later, with the lifeboat leaking and the rudder broken, the six men finally reached South Georgia island, where with only three days of food and supplies left, Shackleton made the decision that he, Worsley and crew member Tom Crean would hike across the island -- an island previously deemed impassable because of its massive mountains and glaciers.

Under such pressure and against such overwhelming odds, one might easily assume that the temperament of these men would have reached its breaking point. Patience and consideration aren’t thought of as characteristics typically called into play when we are being pushed to the limits both physically and mentally, but for Shackleton and his men, it was the primary order of the day. As Worsley later wrote in his diary:

“When men are as tired as we were, their nerves are on edge and it is necessary for each man to take pains not to irritate the others. On this march we treated each other with a good deal more consideration than we should have done in normal circumstances. Never is etiquette and good form observed more carefully than by experienced travelers when they find themselves in a tight place.”

The story of the survival of the *Endurance* crew speaks volumes about behavior that can be called nothing short of extraordinary. Especially when you think of how most of us in today’s society are prone to behave when we are placed under pressure. Instead of showing more consideration, we quite often choose to show less. When put in “tight places” we are more apt to focus on our own needs and feelings rather than anyone else’s. When faced with rudeness, most of us are more inclined to respond rudely in return. Taking pains not to

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irritate others is, for far too many of us, a nicety we'd just as soon ignore. But if we are to take anything from *Endurance* crew's experience, it must be that making every effort to treat those around us with consideration and genuine care truly is the single greatest key to our own survival. We are all connected, in so many more ways than we can even begin to fathom. What we do for others, we truly do for ourselves, as well.

So what was it that enabled these men to act in such an extraordinary manner? It has been noted by many historians that the crew of the *Endurance* were patient, flexible and resilient in the face of adversity. The primary advantage the men possessed, however, was Shackleton's superior leadership. Quite simply, Shackleton put his crew first, making them more important than his own personal quest for fame and glory. He led by example.

As we've already discussed, in the book *The Go-Giver*, the third Law of Stratospheric Success is the Law of Influence which says "Your influence is determined by how abundantly you place other people's interests first." In late 2000, mountaineers Reinhold Messner, Stephen Venables and Conrad Ankers retraced Shackleton's route as part of a Nova expedition. After experiencing firsthand some of the hardships the pioneer group endured, Messner pointed out the importance of Shackleton's desire to help his shipmates:

"Unlike us," Messner said, "they had no idea of the difficulties and danger that lay ahead of them on this last leg of their odyssey. Shackleton realized only that he had to bring help to the 27 men waiting in miserable conditions at the end of the world. The self-rescue of the *Endurance* expedition is a timeless story of a born loser who in the worst failure grew out of himself, made the going home of his men a victory of human endurance, innate risk management, and supreme trust. "

There is no doubt that Shackleton and his men were competent, hardy and imbued with limitless courage. But there can also be no doubt that a major factor in their ability to survive had to have been the common courtesies and conduct they displayed to one another during the span of their torturous odyssey.

Chances are better than good that none of us will ever find ourselves stranded on an ice-locked ship in the Antarctica, but we could very well, from time to time, find ourselves stranded in "tight places" where our courage and tenacity must be called into play. During such trials, the opportunity to positively influence those around us will be found in how we treat our fellow "shipmates" along the way.

There is never a time when your willingness to put others first will not positively influence those around you. If you doubt it does, then consider the words of historian Carolyn Alexander who wrote in her book, *The Endurance*:

"Early in his career, Shackleton became known as a leader who put his men first. This inspired unshakable confidence in his decisions, as well as tenacious loyalty (In an earlier expedition) from Frank Wild, who had

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not begun the expedition as a great admirer of Shackleton, but recorded in his diary an incident that changed his mind forever. Following an inadequate meal, Shackleton privately forced upon Wild one of his own biscuits from the four that he was rationed daily. 'I do not suppose that anyone else in the world can thoroughly realize how much generosity and sympathy was shown by this,' Wild wrote, underlining the words. 'I do by God! I shall never forget it. Thousands of pounds would not have bought that one biscuit!'"

It is also interesting to note that Wild went on to sign up for a second tour of duty with Shackleton and was among the crew of the *Endurance*. According to Ms. Alexander, Wild's unflappable loyalty would prove to be one of the expedition's greatest assets.

Shackleton could not have known specifically what the third Law of Stratospheric Success was, of course, but he did understand that putting the needs of others before his own could turn failure into success. And it was that innate ability to tune into the needs of others and give them priority that inspired Frank Wild to unparalleled loyalty.

Just as Shackleton understood, the very best way any of us can ever work our way through our own difficulties is to look around us and figure out what we can do to help someone else. That's not just being nice. That's working with universal law and **when we work *with* the law, it works *for* us.**

Today's Affirmation

I am blessed to be a blessing.

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Today's Action Steps

1. Re-read your Prosperity Business Plan and your **Eleven Things Gratitude List**.
2. Take a moment to stand firmly with one arm raised to the heavens, the fist clenched as firmly as if you were holding on to the hand of God. Now either mentally or vocally affirm:

As God as my witness, I am powerful today, I am brave today, I am strong today, I am fearless today, I prosper today. And I am living each moment of this day embracing my true nature and moving closer to becoming the person I am destined to be. For today and every day from this point forward this is my truth.

Note: If possible write this affirmation on a card that will fit in your wallet or purse and carry it with you so you can refer whenever you feel doubts or fears arising. And each time you repeat this affirmation, say the words with as much feeling and emotion as you possibly can, spending at least one full minute imagining every aspect of your life as you want it to be.

3. Place today's allotment of money in your container and read the affirmation on the container three times. Expect to receive in return.
4. Bless those around you, including your fellow participants in this experiment. See those you bless prospering and surrounded by good. Then bless yourself and see the same. You may also want to continue blessing those on the blessing request list. Reading the responses will give you an opportunity to see for yourself.
5. Return to the blessings requests and read the responses being posted by those who have been blessed. (you'll find a link at the bottom of this email, or simply go to bettertobless.com and click on "Request a Blessing") Your blessings are making a difference. Reading the responses will give you an opportunity to see for yourself.