

Class Reunion: Recreating those lasting impressions

Of the so-called seven sins, pride's earned a reputation of being the deadliest. For us (many African Americans), it's often said, we have too much of it! To protect the self, historically, pride has been the ego's outlet (an automatic, defense mechanism) to cope with the pain of being marginalized.

An enigma, pride presents us with a paradox; granting us freedom from self-hate, yet enslaving us to high levels of unchecked stress. In our own unique way, each of us feeds off pride's energy to retain our sense of self. But left unchecked, the passion of pride can distance us from other heavenly bodies of life. Much like the unequalled

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Welcome to the New-Look Newsletter!

Greetings Clients, Colleagues and Friends!

If you received the Quarterly, you'll notice a new-look to our e-mail newsletter this month. In the interest of keeping up with the growing and dynamic needs of our readers, we've done some "remodeling," and hope the changes will better meet your needs. For starters, the name and logo have changed from the "DWH Consulting Quarterly" to "Face-2-Face Digest."

More often than not, particularly in this fast paced culture of ours, people crave face-to-face communications, albeit coaching or development of people in organizations. The Face-2-Face Digest plans to offer you incisive snapshots of the topics in the hearts and on the minds of the people that I interact with everyday. Insights that you can use to improve and enlighten your everyday.

Secondly, the Digest will appear more frequently than the former Quarterly. Its content will be shorter and punchier, but it will still contain the topics of interest to this audience.

We hope you enjoy our new look and the changes to the style and presentation of our content. And, as always, we invite and welcome your comments.

21 Ways of Looking at Work:

Ever notice how blacks and whites can view the same situation differently? Tons of survey research has been conducted to punctuate some notable differences, particularly in the workplace. Here's my twenty-one lighter ways of looking at work.

1. On being asked to do a dirty job:

Course not! Who in their right mind would? Turn bad situations around 180 degrees and you can strike gold. Are you a 49er fan?

2. On fitting in with your colleagues:

Nearly all work groups behave like a pride of lions vigilant in protecting and guarding a territory. Before venturing into tall grass, check nearby vegetation for obvious markings, scents and dung.

3. On returning from vacation:

The paper stacked waist-deep on your desk can be a reassuring sign of being needed. Your job, at least until the night maintenance crew dusts the credenza, is secure.

4. On your relationship with the boss:

Supervisor-subordinate relationships ring with an air of distinct familiarity, like parent-child transactions of the

past. However, you may be called on to create a more equal footing with the boss, transcending the primal desire for safety. Are those patent leathers you got on?

5. On being considered a team player:

The extent to which a group perceives you as a team player is defined by your willingness to embrace a course of action that you fundamentally disagree with.

6. On the insidious tenor of prejudice:

By nature, it never dies, but crests and ebbs with the tide of fear some feel in your presence.

7. On feeling alone:

Nowadays, hardly anyone looks like you, a handful shares your view, and few walk the path of your unique American experience. If look-like-me communities don't exist, birth think-like-me ones.

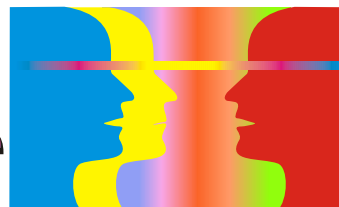
8. On being late for work:

The early riser fends off an age-old stereotype of being seen as the rule rather than the exception, at least for now.

9. On proving yourself:

The burden of proving yourself demands that you live in a constant state of readiness, never knowing when the

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power of a black hole in outer space, pride is invisible to the naked eye of self, yet everything around it seems to get drawn into its gravitational pull.

In this memoir, I reflect upon my return to Ohio from last month's college reunion. Class reunions offer the perfect venue to renew old friendships, catch up on the latest news, and test our ability to stay present. More than anything else, people want to impress, look good for their classmates. Some go all out; others remain grounded. Sometimes, the hyperbole gets thick as Applewood Bacon. At a HBCU (Historically Black College or University), chances are, if your pretense loses track with ground radar, you can be assured that someone will kick your ego back to Earth.

So, how does one build a healthy self without digressing to the low side of our ego, pride? A key part of this balancing act is by tapping into our own humility, pride's polar opposite. In accessing our humility, we are released from the black hole of unbalanced pride.

A necessary first step is to get in touch with the source of this pride. Once charted, we now have access to create an evolved, higher sense of self.

At the end of the memoir, I've included some questions and practices to guide you in your exploration of how pride might be swinging your world out of balance.

By the way, if you don't have someone to help map the stars for you, consider a coach as your co-pilot. Happy exploring!

Also Known As ...

How often have you heard the phrase turned, "I remember the face but not the name"? For me, it's the opposite. Names, not faces, rekindle the history of my past.

Last month's college reunion tested my ability to recall what, at first, seemed like a sea of unfamiliar faces, though many I'd seen daily on campus and its' adjunct dives.

That weekend, former classmates appeared like silhouettes from old photos, faded decoupages from the 1970s. Father time had reconstructed their faces, bodies and along with those, my memories of them too (and perhaps their memory of me)! Even so, their names, especially their aliases, stayed with me like a heap of cheese grits on my plate at breakfast.

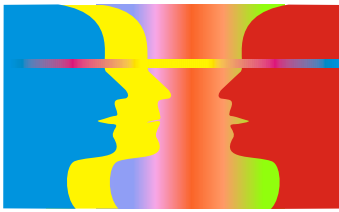
Black collegiates possess a unique way of expressing their love for you by gifting you with a pet name, an alias, usually demeaning and not of your choosing. Who could forget the likes of: Boob, Gator, Snaggles, Nighthawk, Lone, Radical, JB, Panasonic, Bimbo, Pot Pie, Freaky, Allegheny, Bolt Smoke, Black, Gatsby, and far more than I can recount. Of all the things to remember, the names, those aliases, resurrected personalities to life. Can you guess mine?

You won't find these aliases scrawled on applications, transcripts, or diplomas in the Registrar's Office. Nor will you see them emblazoned on birth certificates, driver's licenses, T-shirts, credit cards and other ID. Neither will you hear them spoken aloud in the presence of moms, dads, grandmothers, grandfathers, wives, children and loved ones. In close company, classmates shed the aliases for their birth names. Yet, the aliases gave them their special powers, a unique way of being seen among their circle of close friends.

The alias is really a spoof on a person's personality or a quirky characteristic. Roommates, classmates, fraternity brothers, sorority sisters and close associates branded their classmates with an alias early in their freshman year. Once tagged, the alias, like a full body tattoo, is impossible to remove. And classmates, well ... they remember everything about you all right. Some of it's good but mostly, its bad -- particularly all the funny stuff you did to make yourself look foolish! That's their way, however peculiar, of showing their love.

Mumbles (name withheld to protect the innocent), a nemesis of Dick Tracey comic books fame, tried desperately to erase all traces of his unspeakable alias. An ever so slight hesitation, just before he uttered a single syllable, marked him for life. And, regardless of what he does, whoever he becomes, or

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wherever his journey takes him, he'll always wear the alias, Mumbles. His unsuccessful attempts to alter his brand name drew ire from classmates, and they would mock and ridicule, his posturing. Even with that telephone wristwatch of his, not even Dick Tracey could rescue him from his alias.

As for me, one classmate tried his best to tag me with "Gringo." I hated it with a passion, but lucked out as the name failed to gain consensus. Whew!

It's been said that giving is more divine than receiving. In my concern about ending up with a booby-prize name, I gifted myself with the name Black, Brother Black. Since close friends said I was often quoting black life and black leaders, it seemed like a natural fit.

In the "Say it loud I'm Black and I'm Proud" era, nobody would challenge even a light-complexioned brother with the name Black. Everybody else was seeking their own unique way to express their blackness. To escape being made fun of, I stumbled into mine and was so relieved to have done so.

So, if you return to campus with grandiose ideas of shedding an alias or to making yourself look good, don't do it, I beg of you! Impressive toys, pumped-up biceps, stylish clothes, fancy rings, vacations abroad and inflated stories will do little to alter a classmate's perception of you, especially your ol' alias. Your classmates hold a certain memory of you from your collegiate days. To try and convince them otherwise you'll just be pressing your luck. Let it go and enjoy this moment with them.

Should you pursue the ill-fated former course rather than the latter, don't be surprised if someone turns a phrase on you. It will be just like you're back in the old student union building playing cards. "Hey you; yeah you Gringo! I'm talking to you. We know you! I remember your arrival on campus, just as green as a rancid Granny Smith. Remember, it's us; you're among friends now. Maybe we're not your best friends, but we'll tell you like it is. Straight shooters! Follow me? So stop your yapping with all that fancy talk. Just cut it out! And if you got cards in your hand, play 'em. If not, sit there and shut the hell up!"

Man, it feels so good to be back on campus, again.

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next alarm will sound to test your worthiness.

10. On being labeled:

The energy to dispel a deeply held belief is consuming. A far wiser use of time is to build a book of business - the actual value you generate to the quarterly dividend statement.

11. On the pervasive nature of workplace politics:

It is the underbelly of public, but mostly private, transactions designed by the players with the intent to move up the food chain. Got climbing gear?

12. On that dreaded, annual performance review:

Like a proctology exam, the test is a good measure of your health, but you'll find few standing in line for one.

13. On being an equal opportunity employer:

Nowhere is the slogan more prominently posted than in company literature for all those on the outside to see. Whether those on the inside enjoy this same reference point is worth asking.

14. On being qualified:

The bar to qualify keeps rising, except for those who enjoy the benefit of having been grandfathered in based on a far less demanding set of criteria. Is this worth revisiting? You betcha.

15. On being treated unfairly:

Settle the violation promptly; it saves stressful days, sleepless nights, and afternoons at the local watering hole. If that doesn't do it, look elsewhere for your joy, immediately.

16. On opportunities for promotion:

As you climb the ladder of success, the rungs grow further apart as you inch towards the summit. The art is in knowing when the best time is to switch ladders -- before running out of steps or scaling new peaks.

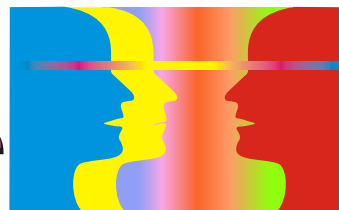
17. On reaching your Peter's principle:

No matter what's taken you this far in your career inevitability it fails you. Hidden from your view, you're unlikely to see it coming. Your capacity to handle this misstep, a moment of failure, can well define the trajectory of your life's work. Or, you can always join the peace corp.

18. On diversity:

The definition has gone through so many iterations. Now, what did you say was the original intent?

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30-Day Practice Questions:

Evoking Humility

1. What recurring reactions, observations, thoughts, conversations, breakdowns and other important recurrences did you observe around pride/humility today?
2. In what ways were you filled with pride/humility today?
3. What triggered your being filled with pride/humility today?
4. What were the outcomes of your being filled with pride/humility today?
5. What actions will you take from your observations in this

exercise?

If you find the practice questions of interest, and would like to explore your questions on "pride and humility" further, I invite you to take a personality style inventory on my web site at <http://www.dwhconsulting.com/personality-style>.

E-mail the results to me at darryl@dwhconsulting.com and indicate your wishes to schedule a complimentary 15-minute consultation on the results of this test and/or your own perceptions, defined through the questions and practices, and I will contact you.

In exploring "pride" through integral coaching you can:

1. Become acquainted with your personal version of pride and how to address it
2. Sit in the space of reawakening your attachments to pride
3. Learn to be with what's already there so you're able to free yourself from its clutches
4. Cultivate a practice of humility to redefine life

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19. On equality:

Equal opportunity lives in the minds; the true wonder is whether it's felt in the hearts.

20. On knowing the work rules:

Slick, tightly bound employee handbooks rarely come with instructions. Those that matter get defined in an instant on the playing field where symbolic acts of victory and defeat set the tone for how things get done. Are you a spectator, announcer, ball boy/girl, umpire or player?

21. On being passed over:

Once, twice, three times or more of denial could sap the vitality of your candidacy. Ever consider running for political office?

Moral: Use what works; toss what doesn't. Seek work that allows the full expression of self to flourish.

Workplace drama can often rival scenes from daytime television. Is work the place where you flourish or falter? Being in touch with what inspires your complete expression of vocation is a rarity, especially nowadays, with less than 80 percent of the workforce in jobs that they enjoy. If the workplace no longer fulfills you, I would invite you to e-mail me for a 15-minute consultation. As a first step, complete the Enneagram on my web site (www.dwhconsulting.com) that you'll find under the Survey tab. Forward the results to my attention (darryl@dwhconsulting.com) and I'll get back with you.

A condensed version of this article appears on Page 31 of "City Flight Magazine," September 2006.

- Strategic Planning • Business Coaching
- Meeting Facilitation • Team Building
- Change Management
- Board & Leadership Development



For information on the topics in this newsletter, or to arrange for training or speakers in the areas it discusses, please contact at us:

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